Priests Embracing Islam

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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Contents

1-Chaplain Yusuf Estes Ex-Christian Businessman
& Preacher. (USA)……………………………………………………..P: 3
2-Abdullah M. al-Faruque Formerly Kenneth L. Jenkins , former
minister and elder of the Pentecostal Church.(USA)..............................P:20
3- Dr. Jerald F. Dirks (Abu Yahya) Former minister (deacon) of the
United Methodist Church. Master's degree in Divinity from Harvard University and a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of
Denver. (USA)……………………………………………...……......P: 28
4- Sister Khadijah "Sue" Watson Former pastor, missionary, professor.
Master's degree in Divinity. (USA Philippines)……..…………….……P: 42
5-Ibrahim Khalil Ahmed (Ibrahim Khalil Philobus) Former Coptic priest
and missionary. (Egypt)……………………………...……….........P: 45
6- Martin John Mwaipopo Former Lutheran Archbishop.
(Tanzania)…………………………………………………………...P: 50
7- Raphael Former Jehovah's Witness Minister. (USA)………………..P: 55
8- George Anthony Former Catholic priest.(Sri Lanka)………..………P: 63
9- Dr. Gary Miller (Abdul-Ahad Omar) a mathematician and Christian missionary. (Canada)…………...………..………..…………………......P: 64
10- Rev. David Benjamin Keldani (Abdu 'l-Ahad Dáwúd). (Iran)…........P: 69
11-Muhammad Aman Hobohm Diplomat, Missionary and Social
Worker. (Germany)………………………………………...……..….P: 72
12-Archpriest Viacheslav Polosin. (Russia)……..……………………..…..P:74

1- Chaplain Yusuf Estes Ex-Christian Businessman & Preacher (USA).



Chaplain Yusuf Estes **Before**



Chaplain Yusuf Estes **After**

My name is Yusuf Estes now, but in years past my friends used to call me Skip. I have preached Christianity and worked in the entertainment and music industry since I was a boy in the 1950's. My father and I have established music stores, TV and radio programs and outdoor entertainment for fun (and profit). I was a music minister and even used a pony ride and entertained the children as "Skippy the Clown."

Once, I have served as Delegate to the United Nations Peace Conference for Religious Leaders. Now I am a retired former Muslim Chaplain for United States Bureau of Prisons, Washington, DC. and I join alongside many American Muslims, working with Muslim student and youth organizations as well as schools for Muslim children. As such, I travel around the entire world lecturing and sharing the message of the Christ of the Quran in Islam. We hold dialogs and discussion groups with all faiths and enjoy the opportunity to work alongside rabbis, ministers, preachers and priests everywhere. Some of our work is in the institutional area, military, universities and prisons. Primarily our goal is to educate and communicate the correct message of Islam and who the Muslims really are. Although Islam has grown now to nearly tie Christianity as the largest of religions on earth, we see many of those who claim Islam as Muslims, that do not correctly understand nor properly represent the message of **"Peace, Surrender and Obedience to God"** [Arabic = **'Islam'**]

How It Happened: This may seem quite strange, while we perhaps may share a few different perspectives and concepts of God, Jesus, prophet hood, sin and salvation. But you see, at one time I was in the same boat as many folks are today. Really, I was. Let me explain.

I was born into a very strong Christian family in the Midwest. Our family and their ancestors not only built the churches and schools across this land, but actually were the same ones who came here in the first place. While I was still in elementary we relocated in Houston, Texas in 1949 (I'm old). We attended church regularly and I was baptized at the age of 12 in Pasadena, Texas. As a teenager, I wanted to visit other churches to learn more of their teachings and beliefs. The Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Charismatic movements, Nazarene, Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Full Gospel, Agape, Catholic, Presbyterian and many more. I developed quite a thirst for the "Gospel" or as we say; "Good News." My research into religion did not stop with Christianity. Not at all. Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Metaphysics, native American beliefs were all a part of my studies. Just about the only one that I did not look into seriously was "Islam". Why? Good question.

Music Minister

Anyway, I became very interested in different types of music, especially Gospel and Classical. Because my whole family was religious and musical it followed that I too would begin my studies in both areas. All this set me for the logical position of Music Minister in many of the churches that I became affiliated with over the years. I started teaching keyboard instruments in 1960 and by 1963 owned my own studios in Laurel, Maryland, called "Estes Music Studios."

Business Projects In Texas, Oklahoma and Florida

Over the next 30 years my father and I worked together in many business projects. We had entertainment programs, shows and attractions. We opened piano and organ stores all the way from Texas and Oklahoma to Florida. We had earned millions of dollars during those years, but could not find the peace of mind that can only come through knowing the truth and finding the real plan of salvation. I'm sure you have asked yourself the question; ***"Why did God create me?"*** or ***"What is it that God wants me to do?"*** or ***"Exactly who is God, anyway?" "Why do we believe in 'original sin?"*** and ***"Why would the sons of Adam be forced to accept his 'sins' and then as a result be punished forever."*** But if you asked anyone these questions, they would probably tell you that you have to believe without asking, or that it is a ***'mystery'*** and you shouldn't ask - ***"Just have faith, brother."***

Trinity Concept

Strangely enough, the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible. And it has been a

concern for religious scholars as early as 200 years after Jesus was raised up by Almighty God. I would ask preachers or ministers to give me some sort of an idea how 'one' could figure out to become 'three' or how God Himself, Who can do anything He Wills to do, cannot just forgive people's sins, but rather and had to become a man, come down on earth, be a human, and then take on the sins of all people; keeping in mind that all along He is still God of the whole universe and does as He Wills to do, both in and outside of the universe as we know it. They never seemed to be able to come up with anything other than opinions or strange analogies.

Father - Ordained Non-Denominational Minister

My father was very active in supporting church work, especially church school programs. He became and ordained minister in the 1970s. He and his wife (my stepmother) knew many of the TV evangelists and preachers and even visited Oral Roberts and helped in the building of the "Prayer Tower" in Tulsa, OK. They also were strong supporters of Jimmy Swaggart, Jim and Tammy Fae Bakker, Jerry Fallwell, John Haggi and Pat Robertson.

Met A Man From Egypt

It was early in 1991 when my father began doing business with a man from Egypt and told me that he wanted me to meet him. This idea appealed to me when I thought about the idea of having an international flavor. You know, the pyramids, sphinx, Nile River and all that.

He Was A "Mozlem": Hijackers; Kidnappers; Bombers, Terrorists - and who knows what else?

Then my father mentioned that this man was a 'Moslem.' First, I hated the idea of meeting an "infidel, hijacker, kidnapper, bomber, terrorist, non-believer." Any normal person would be repulsed at the idea. I couldn't believe my ears. A 'Moslem?' No way! I reminded my dad of the various different things that we had heard about these people.

Lies Against Muslims & Islam - They Told Us, Muslims:

- **Don't even believe in God**
- **They worship a black box in the desert.**
- **And they kiss the ground five times a day.**

No Way! I Did Not Want to Meet Him!

I did not want to meet this 'Moslem' man. No way! My father insisted that I meet him and reassured me that he was a very nice person. This was too much for me. Especially since the evangelists that we used to travel around

with all hated Muslims and Islam very much. They even said things that were not true to make people afraid of Islam. So, why would I want anything to do with these people?

Idea - "Change Him To Christian"
Then an idea came to me, "We can change this man to Christian." So, I gave in and agreed to the meeting. But on my terms.

Met Him With A Bible, Cross and Cap with "Jesus Is Lord!" on it. I agreed to meet him on a Sunday after church so we would be all prayed up and in good standing with the Lord. I would be carrying my Bible under my arm as usual. I would have my big shiny cross dangling and I would have on my cap which says: "Jesus is Lord" right across the front. My wife and two young daughters came along and we were ready for our first encounter with the 'Moslems.'

Where Is He? When I came into the shop and asked my father where the 'Moslem' was, he pointed and said: "He's right over there."
I was confused. That couldn't be the Moslem. No way.

Turban & Beard? I'm looking for a huge man with flowing robes, a big turban on his head, a beard half way down his shirt and eyebrows that go all the way across his forehead with a sword or a bomb under his coat.

No Turban - No Beard - [No Hair at All!]
This man had no beard. In fact, he didn't even have any hair on his head at all. He was nearly bald. Best of all, he was very pleasant with a warm welcome and handshake. This didn't make sense. I thought they are terrorists and bombers. What is this all about?

He Needs Jesus Never mind. I'll get right to work on this guy. He needs to be 'saved' in the 'Name of Jesus' and me and the Lord are going to do it.

Introduction & Interrogation After a quick introduction,

I asked him: **"do you believe in God?**

He said: **Yes.** (Good!)

Then I said: **"Do you believe in Adam and Eve?"**

He said: **Yes .** (Very Good!)

I said: **What about Abraham?**

You believe in him and how he tried to sacrifice his son for God?

He said: **Yes** (Even better!)

Then I asked: **"What about Moses?" "Ten Commandments?"**

"Parting the Red Sea?".

Again he said: **"Yes."** (Better still!)

Then: **What about the other prophets, David, Solomon and John the Baptist?**

He said: **Yes.** (Great!)

I asked: **Do you believe in the Bible?**

Again, he said: **Yes. -** (OK!)

So,now it was time for the big question:**Do you believe in Jesus? That he was the Messiah (Christ) of God?**

Again the said: **Yes..**(Fantastic!)

Well now - ***"This was going to be easier than I had thought."*** **He was just about ready to be baptized only he didn't know it. And I was just the one to do it, too.**

Shocking Knowledge - ***Muslims Believe in the Bible?***

One day in the Spring of 1991, I came to know that the Muslims believed in the Bible. I was shocked. How could this be? But that's not all, they believe in Jesus as:

* A true messenger of God;
* Prophet of God;
* Miracle birth without human intervention;
* He was the 'Christ' or Messiah as predicted in the Bible;
* He is with God now and most important;
* He will be coming back in the Last Days to lead the believers against the 'Antichrist.'

After "***winning souls to the Lord for Jesus***" day after day, this would be a big achievement for me, to catch one of these 'Moslems' and 'convert' him to Christianity.

I asked him if he liked tea and he said he did. So off we went to a little shop in the mall to sit and talk about my favorite subject: ***Beliefs.*** While we sat in that little coffee shop for hours talking (I did most of the talking) I came to know that he was very nice, quiet and even a bit shy. He listened attentively to every word that I had to say and did not interrupt even one time. I liked this man's way and thought that he had definite potential to become a good Christian. - Little did I know the course of events about to unravel in front of my eyes.

First of all, I agreed with my father that we should do business with this man and even encouraged the idea of him traveling along with me on my business trips across the northern part of Texas. Day after day we would ride together and discuss various issues pertaining to different beliefs that people have. And along the way, I could of course interject some of my favorite radio programs of worship and praise to help bring the message to this poor individual. We talked about the concept of God; the meaning of life; the purpose of creation; the prophets and their mission and how God reveals His Will to mankind. We also shared a lot of personal experiences and ideas as well.

One day I came to know that my friend Mohamed was going to move out of the home he have been sharing with a friend of his and was going to be living in the mosque for a time. I went to my dad and asked him if we could invite Mohamed to come out to our big home in the country and stay there with us. After all, he could share some of the work and some expenses and he would be right there when we were ready to go to out traveling around. My father agreed and Mohamed moved in.

Of course I still would find time to visit my fellow preachers and evangelists around the state of Texas. One of them lived on the Texas -- Mexico border and another lived near lived Oklahoma border. One preacher liked to a huge wooden cross that was bigger than a car. He would carry it over his shoulder and drag the bottom on the ground and go down the road or freeway hauling these two beams formed in the shape of a cross. People would stop their cars and come over to him and ask him what was going on and he would give them pamphlets and booklets on Christianity.

One day my friend with the cross had a heart attack and had to go to the Veterans Hospital where he stayed for quite a long while. I used to visit him in the hospital several times a week and I would take Mohamed with me with the hopes that we could all share together in the subject of beliefs and religions. My friend was not very impressed and it was obvious that he did not want to know anything about Islam. Then one day a man who was sharing the room with my friend came rolling into the room in his wheelchair. I went to him and asked him his name and he said that it didn't matter and when I asked him where he was from he said he was from the planet Jupiter. I thought about what he said and then began to wonder if I was in the cardiac ward or the mental ward.

I knew the man was lonely and depressed and needed someone in his life. So, I began to 'witness' to him about the Lord. I read to him out of the book of Jonah in the Old Testament. And the idea was that we can't really run

away from our problems because we always know what we have done. And what is more, God also always knows what we have done.

Catholic Priest

After sharing this story with the man in the wheel chair, he looked up and me and apologized. He told me he was sorry for his rude behavior and that he had experienced some real serious problems recently. Then he said that he wanted to confess something to me. And I said that I was not a Catholic priest and I don't handle confessions. He replied back to me that he knew that. In fact, he said: ***"I am a Catholic priest."***

I was shocked. Here I had been trying to preach Christianity to a priest. What in the world was happening here?

Priest in Latin America

The priest began to share his story of being a missionary for the church for over 12 years to south and Central America and Mexico and even in New York's 'Hell's Kitchen.' When he was released from the hospital he needed a place to go to recover and rather than let him go to stay with a Catholic family, I told my dad that we should invite him to come out and live with us in the country along with our families and Mohamed. It was agreed by all that he would so, he moved out right away.

Priests Must Study ISLAM? - *YES!*

During the trip out to our home, I talked with the priest about some of the concepts of beliefs in Islam and to my surprise he agreed and then shared even more about this with me. I was shocked when he told me that Catholic priests actually study Islam and some even carry doctors degrees in this subject. This was all very enlightening to me. But there was still a lot more to come.

Different Versions of the Bible

After settling in, we all began to gather around the kitchen table after dinner every night to discuss religion. My father would bring his ***King James Version of the Bible***, I would bring out my ***Revised Standard Version of the Bible***, my wife had another version of the Bible (maybe something like Jimmy Swaggart's '***Good News For Modern Man***." The priest of course, had the ***Catholic Bible*** which has 7 more books in it that the ***Protestant Bible***. So we spent more time talking about which Bible was the right one or the most correct one, than we did trying to convince Mohamed about becoming a Christian.

Quran Has Only ONE Version - In Arabic - And Still Exists

At one point I recall asking him about the Quran and how many versions of it there were in the last 1,400 years. He told me that there was only ONE QURAN. And that it had never been changed. Yet he let me know that the Quran had been memorized by hundreds of thousands of people, in it's entirety and were scattered about the earth in many different countries. Over the centuries since the Quran was revealed millions have memorized it completely and have taught it to others who have memorized it completely, from cover to cover, letter perfect without mistakes. Today, over 9 million Muslims have memorized the entire Quran from cover to cover.

This did not seem possible to me. After all, the original languages of the Bible have all been dead languages for centuries and the documents themselves have been lost in their originals for hundreds and thousands of years. So, how could it be that something like this could be so easy to preserve and to recite from cover to cover.

Anyway, one day the priest asked the Mohamed if he might accompany him to the mosque to see what it was like there. They came back talking about their experience there and we could not wait to ask the priest what it was like and what all types of ceremonies they performed. He said they didn't really 'do' anything. They just came and prayed and left. I said: "They left? Without any speeches or singing?" He said that was right.

Priest Enters Islam!

A few more days went by and the Catholic priest asked Mohamed if he might join him again for a trip to the mosque which they did. But this time it was different. They did not come back for a very long time. It became dark and we worried that something might have happened to them. Finally they arrived and when they came in the door I immediately recognized Mohamed, but who was this alongside of him? Someone wearing a white robe and a white cap. Hold on a minute! It was the priest. I said to him: "Pete? -- Did you become a 'Moslem?

He said that he had entered into Islam that very day. THE PRIEST BECAME A MUSLIM!! What next? (You'll see).

My Wife Announces Her Islam!

So, I went upstairs to think things over a bit and began to talk to my wife about the whole subject. She then told me that she too was going to enter into Islam, because she knew it was the truth.

I was really shocked now. I went downstairs and woke up Mohamed and asked him to come outside with me for a discussion. We walked and talked that whole night through.

Truth Had Come!

By the time he was ready to pray Fajr (the morning prayer of the Muslims) I knew that the truth had come at last and now it was up to me to do my part. I went out back behind my father's house and found an old piece of plywood lying under an overhang and right there I put my head down on the ground facing the direction that the Muslims pray five times a day.

Guide Me! O God! Guide Me!

Now then in that position, with my body stretched out on the plywood and my head on the ground, I asked: "O God. If you are there, guide me, guide me."

And then after a while I raised up my head and I noticed something. No, I didn't see birds or angels coming out of the sky nor did I hear voices or music, nor did I see bright lights and flashes. What I did notice was a change inside of me. I was aware now more than ever before that it was time for me to stop any lying and doing anything sneaky. It was time that I really work at being an honest and upright man. I knew now what I had to do.

So I went upstairs and took a shower with the distinct idea that I was 'washing' away the sinful old person that I had become over the years. And I was now coming into a new, fresh life. A life based on truth and proof.

Around 11:00 A.M. that morning, I stood before two witnesses, one the ex-priest, formerly known as Father Peter Jacob's, and the other Mohamed Abdel Rahman and announced my 'shahadah' (open testimony to the Oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him).

"I bear witness, there is no deity to worship, except Almighty Allah, alone and He has no partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His messenger and servant."

A few minutes later, my wife follow along and gave the same testimony. But hers was in front of 3 witnesses (me being the third).

My father was a bit more reserved on the subject and waited a few more months before he made his shahadah (public testimony). But he did finally commit to Islam and began offering prayers right along with me and the other Muslims in the local masjid (mosque).

The children were taken out of the Christian school and placed in Muslim schools. And now ten years later, they are memorizing much of the Quran and the teachings of Islam.

My father's wife finally acknowledged, before she died, that Jesus could not be a son of God and that he must have been a mighty prophet of God, but not God. She passed away within a few months of this statement at age 86. May Allah accept her statement of faith, ameen.

Now stop and think. A whole entire household of people from varying backgrounds and ethnic groups coming together in truth to learn how to know and worship the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Think. A Catholic priest; a minister of music and preacher of the Gospel; an ordained minister and builder of Christian schools; and the children, even a great-grandmother - they all come into Islam!

Only by His Mercy were we all guided to see the real truth of Islam, by removing the coverings over our ears and the blinders on our eyes, no longer having seals over our hearts - He was Guiding us now.

Amazing Story - Family and Friends Entering Islam - From One Man.

If I were to stop right here, I'm sure that you would have to admit that at least, this is an amazing story, right? After all, three religious leaders of three separate denominations all going into one very opposite belief at the same time and then soon after the rest of the household.

More? - Yes! Baptist Seminary Student Reads Quran - Accepts Islam

But that is not all. There is more! The same year, while I was in Grand Prairie, Texas (near Dallas) I met a Baptist seminary student from Tennessee named Joe, who also came to Islam after reading the Holy Quran while in BAPTIST SEMINARY COLLEGE!

More? Yes. Catholic Priest Loves Islam - But Needs His Job!

There are others as well. I recall the case of the Catholic priest in a college town who talked about the good things in Islam so much that I was forced to ask him why he didn't enter Islam. He replied: ***"What? And loose my job?"*** - His name is Father John and we still pray for Allah to Guide Him.

Another Catholic Priest Makes Shahadah

The very next year I met a former Catholic priest who had been a missionary for 8 years in Africa. He learned about Islam while he was there and entered into Islam. He then changed his name to Omar and moved to Dallas Texas.

Any more? *Again - Yes!* Orthodox Arch Bishop leaves church for Islam

Two years later, while in San Antonio, Texas I was introduced to a former Arch Bishop of the Orthodox Church of Russia who learned about Islam and gave up his position to enter Islam.

Daughter of Hindu Pundit (Religious Leader) - Accepts Islam – Helping thousands to Islam

I met a woman in New York who wanted to make our CDs about "What Is Islam?" After giving her permission several years ago, I have learned she has produced and distributed over 600 thousand of these to the non-Muslims in America. May Allah reward her and keep her strong in her efforts, ameen.

Hundreds - Thousands - Still Coming

And since my own entrance into Islam and becoming a chaplain to the Muslims throughout the country and around the world, I have encountered many more individuals who were leaders, teachers and scholars in other religions who learned about Islam and entered into it. They came from Hindus, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, Greek and Russian Orthodox, Coptic Christians from Egypt, non-denominational churches and even scientists who had been atheists.

The combination always seems to be the same; people are sincerely seeking the truth and are willing to put their different prejudices and biases out of their minds and begin to ask God for His Guidance in their lives.

So, now you have the introduction to the story of my coming into Islam and becoming Muslim. There is more on the Internet about this story and there are more pictures there as well. Please take the time to visit it and then please take the time to email me and let us come together to share in all truths based on proofs for understanding our origins and our purpose and goals in this life and the Next Life.

May I suggest to the seeker of truth do the following NINE STEPS to purification of the heart?

1-Clean - your mind, your heart & soul - remove all prejudices & biases.

2-Thank God - for what you have - every moment of every day.

3-Read - a good translation of the meaning of the Noble Quran in a language that they can understand best.
(http://islamtomorrow.com/downloads/noblequran.exe)

4-Reflect on the meanings & consider the bounties of your Lord.

5-Seek - Forgiveness From God & Learn to Forgive others.

6-Ask - in your heart for Guidance from Above.

7-Open - your heart and mind.

8-Continue - to do this up for a few months. And be regular in it.

9-Avoid - the poison of evil while your heart is opening for the ***"rebirth of your soul."***

Remember -Clean;Thank;Read;Reflect-

Then "Seek, and ye shall find. Ask, and it shall be given thee. Knock, and it shall be opened."

Then Continue & Avoid.

The rest is between you and the Almighty Lord of the Universe. If you truly love Him, then He already Knows it and He will deal with each of us according to our hearts.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Now as I promised here are the answers to the questions many have asked me connected with my choice of Islam:

1. "How could you have turned your back on the perfect plan of salvation of Jesus Christ on the cross for you sins?"

Answer: Your question implies you have not considered the similarities and teachings of the Bible and the Quran.

"ISLAM" means - "Surrender, submit and obey your Lord in sincerity and peace." Whoever is trying to do this, is a "MUSLIM." If someone believes in

Almighty God as One God and One Lord and wants to commit their life to serving Him and obeying His Commandments, then that person will be in the right way and they will be "saved" according to God's Mercy. No one can take the sins of another and the guilty must stand accused for what they have done. It will be up to Almighty God to Forgive or Punish according to His Judgment on that Day.

According to the remains of the translations of the Bible Jesus, peace be upon him, did not preach a message of salvation by worshipping him. This was something added later by Saul (who later became Paul). We find clear statements indicating salvation would come only through acknowledging Almighty God as One God and worshipping Him with all the heart, mind and strength. Jesus, peace be upon him, taught his followers to worship "My God and your God, My Lord and your Lord."

Again, according to the remains of the English translation of the Bible, we see the one on the cross crying out a very blasphemous statement, ***"Eli! Eli! Lama sabachthani?" (Which being translated means, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?")*** This statement on the cross clearly indicates the one on the cross is not pleased with the situation nor does he consider it right or just. Therefore, one would have to conclude this was not something Jesus approved of nor did he accept, or else someone else was on the cross in his place. Either way you look at it, the one on the cross did not accept this as a plan of salvation.

The Quran is absolutely in agreement with these teachings and Muslims do worship the same God and Lord of Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Adam, peace be upon them all. The Quran states in many places, no one will be taken to task for the sins of another, nor can anyone carry the burden of another. We will all be on our own on that Day. And I ask Allah to have Mercy and Forgiveness for all those who believe in Him, ameen.

I consider that I have not left the teachings of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him. On the contrary, I feel much closer to Jesus, peace be upon him, and I look forward to His return on earth more than ever before. Now I am worshipping the same God he worships and I serve the same Lord he serves, in the very same way he does. Jesus prayed to Almighty God and taught his followers to do the same. I am simply doing what he commanded to the best of my ability and ask Almighty God to accept it.

2. "Do you consider you were really "saved" and that you had in fact, been "born again?"

Answer: The Baptists have a statement, "Once saved, always saved." I asked one of them about this and he agreed it was true. Then I mentioned at one time I had become a Baptist (in my teen years) but now I was a Muslim. I had also been "saved" and baptized at the age of 12. I had accepted the very statement of Jesus being the way, the light and the truth and no man coming on to the Father except by him. I understood these statements to mean I must follow Jesus and his teachings. Therefore, I read the Bible for myself and did not let others tell me what to think about what I was reading.

The Bible states that Jesus prayed for salvation for himself in the garden of Gethsemane in this way, ***"Let this cup pass from me, even so, Thy Will be done."*** This prayer was repeated by Jesus, peace be upon him, a number of times and it is mentioned in more than one Gospel. Yet, according to Biblical accounts, the cup did not pass from him and his prayers were NOT ANSWERED. Islam teaches us his prayers were answered and he did not have to endure the cruel treatment and death on the cross, but rather he was taken up while still alive and is with Almighty God even now and ready to return in the Last Days to bring victory to the believers.

Additionally, we find Jesus, peace be upon him, teaching his disciples to pray like this, ***"Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from all evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and Glory, forever and ever, ameen."*** Every Muslim I have met accepts every single word of this pray with the exception of calling "Allah" our "Father." Muslims consider it better to call on Almighty God by His Names, which we do consider to be "Hallowed."

3. "How did your family respond to your conversion?"

Answer: This is always difficult for families to adjust to and it usually takes time. My family was no exception. Although my wife, children entered into Islam and eventually my father came to declare Islam to be the way of salvation for himself, still my own mother and many others in my family resented our going to Islam at first. Eventually, things became more normalized and we do stay in touch, although they are all still very much involved in Christianity.

Allah promises to test those who declare their faith in Him with many types of difficulties and family is one of those mentioned as a test in the Quran. I do pray for them and ask Allah to guide them to the very best in this life and the very best in the Next Life. But it is up to Allah if He wants them to be in Submission to Him (Islam means, submission to Allah) or not.

4. "How about your congregation? What did they say?"

Answer: I never had my own church. I was a music minister in the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana branch) in Texas and did my preaching to businessmen and informal gatherings. Those who knew me for the most part did not object and some even came to Islam, but there were a few who felt very upset and accused me of "Turing my back on Jesus, peace be upon him." No matter what I tried to say or do, these particular individuals would not listen nor did they want to learn anything about Islam.

5. "Did you experience a lot of difficulties in changing religions?"

Answer: Certainly anyone who wants to consider Islam in these times, just as in times gone by, will have to recognize there will be certain difficulties and tests along the way. The followers of Jesus, peace be upon him, were highly criticized and persecuted even until death (read what Paul said he used to do to them in the Bible; Book of Acts of the Apostles). Those who followed Muhammad, peace be upon him, suffered at the hands of their very own tribes, yet they were determined to continue to worship Almighty God Alone, without partners and submit to His Will.

The biggest problem with non-Muslims, is their lack of understanding and lack of knowledge as to what Islam is really all about and who the Muslims are supposed to be. I pray for them all and ask Allah to forgive the Muslims for not showing a better picture to everyone.

6. "Who was responsible for converting you?"

Answer: As Muslims we believe that it is only Allah who guides the people and whoever He guides will not be misguided and whomever He lets go astray none will be able to guide them. As such, it means we don't believe anyone really can "convert" someone else.

Also, we accept that all children are born in the natural state of submission to Almighty God and as such that means they are Muslims. Should a child die he or she would go to Heaven as they are not responsible for what they do not understand.

7. "Don't you ever think about coming back to being

a Christian?"

Answer: "Christian" indicates a follower of Christ. When Jesus, peace be upon him, returns to earth in the Last Days, all the Muslims will be obliged to follow him. But we would not call ourselves "Christians" anymore than he would. He never called himself or his companions "Christians." The Bible tells us they were never even called "Christians" until Paul was preaching his message in Antioch.

8. "Doesn't it bother you to have left the way of peace, justice and love for a religion of hatred, violence and oppression toward women and others?"

Answer: All the prophets, peace be upon them all, called the people to worship Almighty God as One God and One Lord. As such, those who did not want to submit to Almighty God would combat them and treat them with hostilities, even unto death, as Paul had done while still being a Pharisee. The prophets, peace be upon them all, did encourage their followers to live in peace and deal with people in justice and certainly love is the highest form of emotion a human can have for another human being.

Yet at the same time, believers have to defend themselves, their families and the religion itself, lest those who are not believers should remove belief from the very face of the earth. Islam, like Christianity preaches a message of peace and tolerance - to a point. But when this is no longer possible without totally compromising and loosing one's way of life and belief system, then there is no alternative except to engage in open combat against those who are combating against the believers.

Jesus called upon his followers to sell their coats and buy swords. He explained that he did not come with peace, but rather a sword. He and his companions were engaged in mortal combat with their enemies, the

Pharisees when one of the priests slaves had his ear cut by the sword. Jesus then told them to put down their swords. This is mentioned in the Bible.

The word "sword" appears over 200 times in the Bible - but even though the Arabic language has more than a dozen words for sword, there is not a single occurrence of any of these words anywhere in the Quran.

Combat is ordered in the Quran, only under very specific and limited conditions and it is nothing more than what we would today call "The War on Terrorism." Fighting against all acts of organized aggression, oppression, persecution and terrorism is an obligation on all believers. But it certainly has limits and women, children, elderly and any innocents are not to killed or injured during such occasions. Treatment of prisoners is not to be humiliating or torture of any kind. Even the dead of the enemy are to be buried with dignity and respect.

May Allah guide you on your journey to all truth. Ameen.

And May He open your heart and your mind to the reality

of this world and the purpose of this life, Ameen.

Peace to you and Guidance from Allah the One Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of all that exists.

Your friend,

Yusuf Estes
6317 Edsall Rd.
Alexandria , VA 22312

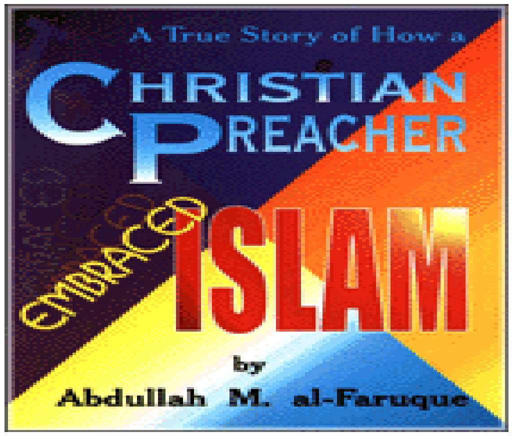
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http://thetruereligion.org/modules/xfsection/

2- Abdullah M. al-Faruque Formerly Kenneth L. Jenkins, minister and elder of the Pentecostal Church. (USA)



As a former minister and elder of the Christian church, it has become incumbent upon me to enlighten those that continue to walk in darkness. After embracing Islam I felt a dire need to help those who have not yet been blessed to experience the light of Islam.

I thank Almighty God, Allah, for having mercy upon me, causing me to come to know the beauty of Islam as taught by Prophet Muhammad and his rightly guided followers. It is only by the mercy of Allah that we receive true guidance and the ability to follow the straight path, which leads to success in this life and the Hereafter.

Praise be to Allah for the kindness shown to me by Shaykh 'Abdullah bin 'Abdul-'Azeez bin Baz (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) upon my embracing Islam. I cherish and will pass on the knowledge gained from each meeting with him. There are many others who have helped me by means of encouragement and knowledge. Sufficient it is to say that I thank Almighty God, Allah, for each and every brother and sister that He has allowed to play a role in my growth and development as a Muslim.

I pray that this short work will be of benefit to all. I hope that Christians will find that there is yet I hope for the wayward conditions that prevail over the bulk of Christendom. The answers to Christian problems are not to be found with the Christians themselves, for they are, in most instances, the root of their own problems. Rather, Islam is the solution to the problems plaguing the world of Christianity, as well as the problems facing the so-called world of religion as a whole. May Allah guide us all and reward us according to the very best of our deeds and intentions.

As a young boy I was raised with a deep fear of God. Having been partially raised by a grandmother who was a Pentecostal fundamentalist, the church became an integral part of my life at a very early age. By the time I had reached the age of six, I knew all too well the benefits awaiting me in Heaven for being a good little boy and the punishment awaiting in Hell for little boys who are naughty. I was taught by my grandmother that all liars were doomed to go to the Hellfire, where they would burn forever and ever.

My mother worked two full-time jobs and continued to remind me of the teachings given to me by her mother. Every Sunday we would go to church dressed in all of our finery. My grandfather was our means of transportation. Church would last for what seemed to me like hours. We would arrive at around eleven in the morning and not leave until sometimes three in the afternoon. Our Grand father was not a church goer, but he saw to it that my family made it there every Sunday. Sometime later he suffered a stroke, which left him partially paralyzed, and as a result, we were unable to attend church on a regular basis. This period of time would be one of the most crucial stages of my development.

Rededication

I was relieved, in a sense, at no longer being able to attend church, but I would feel the urge to go on my own every now and then. At age sixteen I began attending the church of a friend whose father was the pastor. It was a small storefront building with only my friend's family, myself, and another schoolmate as members. This went on for only several months before -the church closed down. After graduating from high school and entering the university I rediscovered my religious commitment and became fully immersed in Pentecostal teachings. I was baptized and "filled with the Holy Ghost," as the experience was then called. As a college student, I quickly became the pride of the church. Everyone had high hopes for me, and I was happy to once again be "on the road to salvation".

I attended church every time its doors would open. I studied the Bible for days and weeks at a time. I attended lectures given by the Christian scholars of my day, and I acknowledged my call to the ministry at the age of 20. I began preaching and became well known very quickly. I was extremely dogmatic and believed that no one could receive salvation unless they were of my church group. I categorically condemned everyone who had not come to know God the way I had come to know Him. I was taught that Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) and God Almighty were one and the same thing. I was taught that our church did not believe in the trinity but that Jesus

(peace be upon him) was indeed the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I tried to make myself understand it even though I had to admit that I really did not fully understand it. As far as I was concerned, it was the only doctrine that made sense to me. I admired the holy dress of the women and the pious behavior of the men. I enjoyed practicing a doctrine where women were required to dress in garments covering themselves completely, not painting their faces with makeup, and carrying themselves as true ambassadors of Christ. I was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had finally found the true path to eternal bliss. I would debate with anyone from a different church with different beliefs and would totally silence them with my knowledge of the Bible. I memorized hundreds of Biblical passages, and this became a trademark of my preaching. Yet, even though I felt assured of being on the right path, a part of me was still searching. I felt that there was an even higher truth to be attained.

I would meditate while alone and pray to God to lead me to the correct religion and to forgive me if what I was doing was wrong. I had never had any contact with Muslims. The only people I knew that claimed Islam as their religion were the followers of Elijah Muhammad, who were referred to by many as the "Black Muslims" or the "Lost-Found Nation." It was during this period in the late seventies that Minister Louis Farrakhan was well into rebuilding what was called "The Nation of Islam." I went to hear Minister Farrakhan speak at the invitation of a coworker and found it to be an experience that would change my life dramatically. I had never in my life heard another black man speak the way that he spoke. I immediately wanted to arrange a meeting with him to try to convert him to my religion. I enjoyed evangelizing, hoping to find lost souls to save from the Hellfire - no matter who they were.

After graduating from college I began to work on a full-time basis. As I was reaching the pinnacle of my ministry, the followers of Elijah Muhammad became more visible, and I appreciated their efforts in attempting to rid the black community of the evils that were destroying it from within. I began to support them, in a sense, by buying their literature and even meeting with them for dialogue. I attended their study circles to find out exactly what they believed. As sincere as I knew many of them were, I could not buy the idea of God being a black man. I disagreed with their use of the Bible to support their position on certain issues. Here was a book that I knew very well, and I was deeply disturbed at what I deemed was their misinterpretation of it. I had attended locally supported Bible schools and had become quite knowledgeable in various fields of Bible study.

After about six years I moved to Texas and became affiliated with two churches. The first church was led by a young pastor who was inexperienced and not very learned. My knowledge of the Christian scriptures had by this time developed into something abnormal. I was obsessed with Biblical teachings. I began to look deeper into the scriptures and realized that I knew more than the present leader. As a show of respect, I left and joined another church in a different city where I felt that I could learn more. The pastor of this particular church was very scholarly. He was an excellent teacher but had some ideas that were not the norm in our church organization. He held somewhat liberal views, but I still enjoyed his indoctrination. I was soon to learn the most valuable lesson of my Christian life, which was "all that glitters is not gold." Despite its outward appearance, there were evils taking place that I never thought were possible in the Church. These evils caused me to reflect deeply, and I began questioning the teaching to which I was so dedicated.

Welcome to the Real Church World

I soon discovered that there was a great deal of jealousy prevalent in the ministerial hierarchy. Things had changed from that to which I was accustomed. Women wore clothing that I thought was shameful. People dressed in order to attract attention, usually from the opposite sex. I discovered just how great a part money and greed play in the operation of church activities. There were many small churches struggling, and they called upon us to hold meetings to help raise money for them. I was told that if a church did not have a certain number of members, then I was not to waste my time preaching there because I would not receive ample financial compensation. I then explained that I was not in it for the money and that I would preach even if there was only one member present... and I'd do it for free! This caused a disturbance. I started questioning those whom I thought had wisdom, only to find that they had been putting on a show. I learned that money, power and position were more important than teaching the truth about the Bible. As a Bible student, I knew full well that there were mistakes, contradictions and fabrications. I thought that people should be exposed to the truth about the Bible. The idea of exposing the people to such aspects of the Bible was a thought supposedly attributable to Satan. But I began to publicly ask my teachers questions during Bible classes, which none of them could answer. Not a single one could explain how Jesus was supposedly God, and how, at the same time, he was supposedly the Father, Son and Holy Ghost wrapped up into one and yet was not a part of the

trinity. Several preachers finally had to concede that they did not understand it but that we were simply required to believe it.

Cases of adultery and fornication went unpunished. Some preachers were hooked on drugs and had destroyed their lives and the lives of their families. Leaders of some churches were found to be homosexuals. There were pastors even guilty of committing adultery with the young daughters of other church members. All of this coupled with a failure to receive answers to what I thought were valid questions was enough to make me seek a change. That change came when I accepted a job in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

A New Beginning

It was not long after arriving in Saudi Arabia that I saw an immediate difference in the lifestyle of the Muslim people. They were different from the followers of Elijah Muhammad and Minister Louis Farrakhan in that they were of all nationalities, colors and languages. I immediately expressed a desire to learn more about this peculiar brand of religion. I was amazed with the life of Prophet Muhammad and wanted to know more. I requested books from one of the brothers who was active in calling people to Islam. I was supplied with all of the books that I could possibly want. I read each and every one. I was then given the Holy Qur'an and read it completely several times within four months. I asked question after question and received satisfactory answers. What appealed to me was that the brothers were not keen on impressing me with their knowledge. If a brother did not know how to answer a question, he would tell me that he simply did not know and would have to check with someone who did. The next day he would always bring the answer. I noticed how humility played such a great role in the lives of these mysterious people of the Middle East.

I was amazed to see the women covering themselves from face to foot. I did not see any religious hierarchy. No one was competing for any religious position. All of this was wonderful, but how could I entertain the thought of abandoning a teaching that had followed me since childhood? What about the Bible? I knew that there is some truth in it even though it had been changed and revised countless numbers of times. I was then given a video cassette of a debate between Shaykh Ahmed Deedat and Reverend Jimmy Swaggart. After seeing the debate I immediately became a Muslim.

You can listen to the debate at this web sitehttp://www.islam.org/audio/ra622_4.ram



You can download the books of

Shaykh Ahmed Deedat

From these web sites

www.ahmed-deedat.co.za

www.aljame3.com

I officially declared my acceptance of Islam. It was there that I was given sound advice on how to prepare myself for the long journey ahead. It was truly a birth from darkness into light. I wondered what my peers from the Church would think when they heard that I had embraced Islam. It was not long before I found out. I went back to the United States for vacation and was severely criticized for my "lack of faith." I was stamped with many labels - from renegade to reprobate. People were told by so-called church leaders not to even remember me in prayer. As strange as it may seem, I was not bothered in the least. I was so happy that Almighty God, Allah, had chosen to guide me aright that nothing else mattered.

Now I only wanted to become as dedicated a Muslim as I was a Christian. This, of course, meant study. I realized that a person could grow as much as they wanted to in Islam. There is no monopoly of knowledge - it is free to all who wish to avail themselves of the opportunities to learn. I was given a set of Saheeh Muslim as a gift from my Qur'an teacher. It was then that I realized the need to learn about the life, sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad . I read and studied as many of the hadith collections available in English as possible. I realized that my knowledge of the Bible was an asset that is now quite useful in dealing with those of Christian backgrounds. Life for me has taken on an entirely new meaning. One of the most profound attitude changes is a result of knowing that this life must actually be spent in

preparation for life in the Hereafter. It was also a new experience to know that we are rewarded even for our intentions. If you intend to do good, then you are rewarded. It was quite different in the Church. The attitude was that "the path to Hell is paved with good intentions." There was no way to win. If you sinned, then you had to confess to the pastor, especially if the sin was a great sin, such as adultery. You were judged strictly by your actions.

The Present and Future

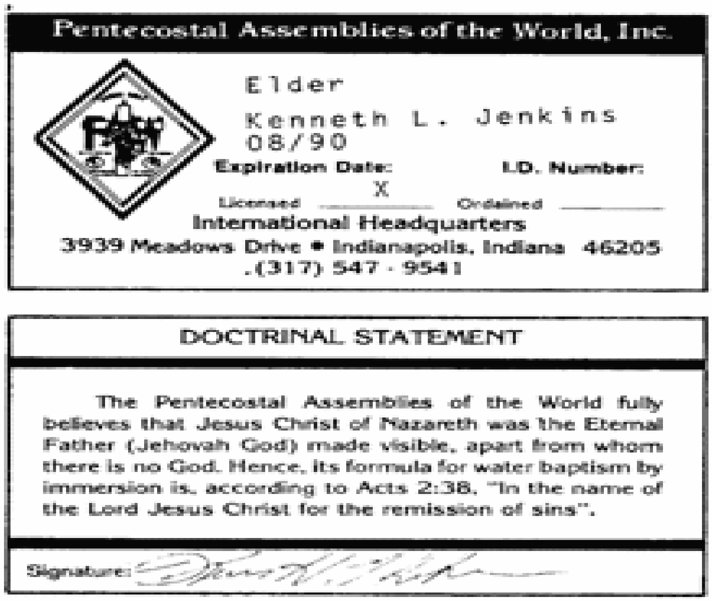
After an interview by the Al-Madinah newspaper I was asked about my present-day activities and plans for the future. At present, my goal is to learn Arabic and continue studying to gain greater knowledge about Islam. I am presently engaged in the field of da'wah and am called upon to lecture to non-Muslims who come from Christian backgrounds. If Allah, Almighty, spares my life, I hope to write more on the subject of comparative religion.

It is the duty of Muslims throughout the world to work to spread the knowledge of Islam. As one who has spent such a long time as a Bible teacher, I feel a special sense of duty in educating people about the errors, contradictions and fabricated tales of a book believed in by millions of people. One of the greatest joys is knowing that I do not have to engage in a great deal of dispute with Christians, because I was a teacher who taught most of the dispute techniques used by them. I also learned how to argue using the Bible to defend Christianity. And at the same time I know the counter arguments for each argument which we, as ministers, were forbidden by our leaders to discuss or divulge.

It is my prayer that Allah will forgive us all of our ignorance and guide us to the path leading to Paradise. All praise is due to Allah. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His last messenger, Prophet Muhammad, his family, companions, and those following true guidance.

Abdullah Muhammad al-Faruque (Kenneth L. Jenkins)

At-Ta'if, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc.

Elder

Kenneth L. Jenkins

08/90

Expiration Date: I.D. Number:

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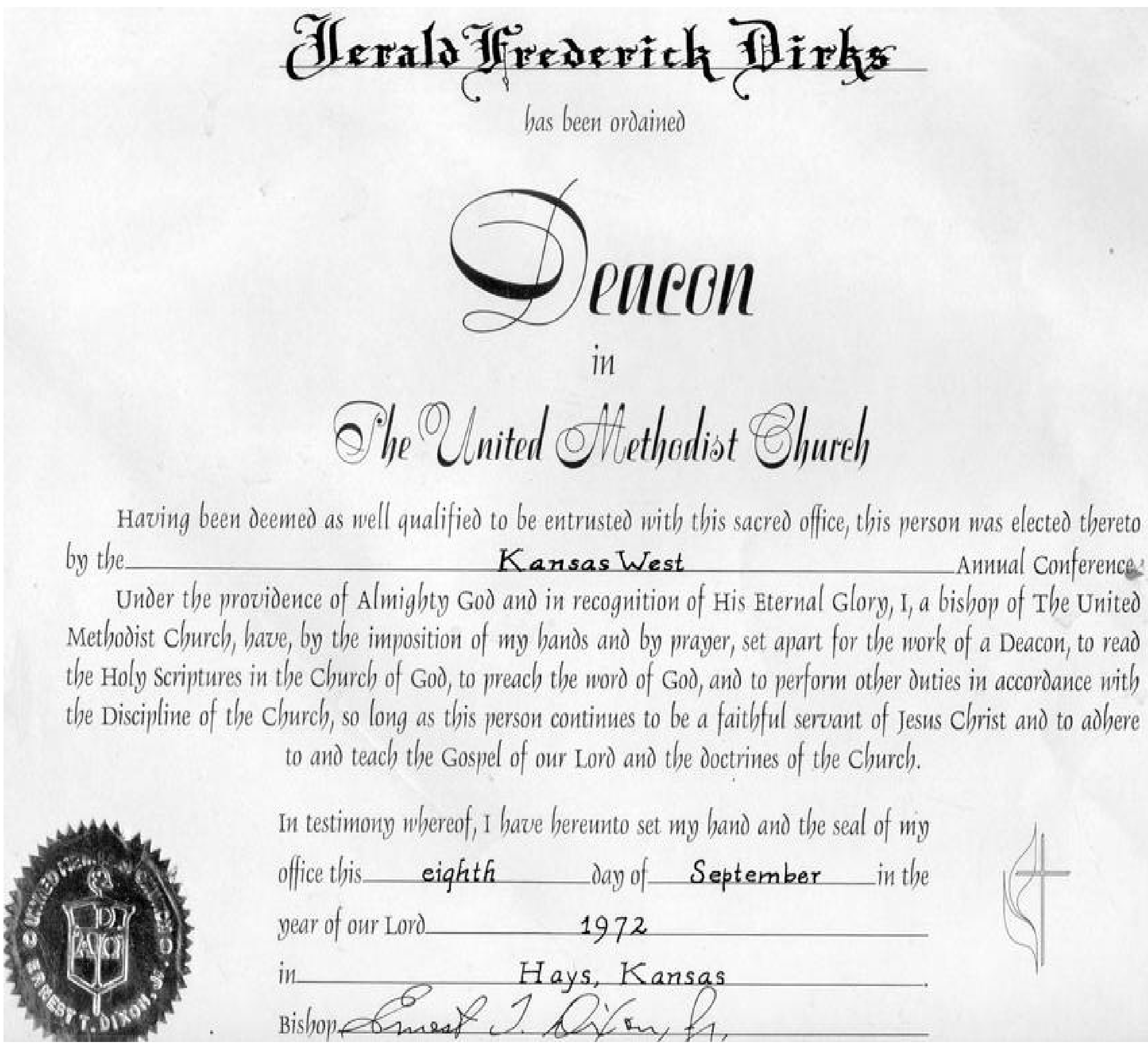
The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World fully believes that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the Eternal Father (Jehovah God) made visible, apart from whom there is no God. Hence, its formula for water baptism by immersion is, according to Acts 2:38, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins".

Signature:

ID card of a priest

3- Dr. Jerald F. Dirks (Abu Yahya) Former minister (deacon) of the United Methodist Church. He holds Master's degree in Divinity from Harvard University and a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of Denver. (USA)





Jerald Frederick Dirks

has been ordained

Deacon

in

The United Methodist Church

Having been deemed as well qualified to be entrusted with this sacred office, this person was elected thereto by the Kansas West Annual Conference.

Under the providence of Almighty God and in recognition of His Eternal Glory, I, a bishop of The United Methodist Church, have, by the imposition of my hands and by prayer, set apart for the work of a Deacon, to read the Holy Scriptures in the Church of God, to preach the word of God, and to perform other duties in accordance with the Discipline of the Church, so long as this person continues to be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and to adhere to and teach the Gospel of our Lord and the doctrines of the Church.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of my office this eighth day of September in the year of our Lord 1972 in Hays, Kansas.

Bishop Ernest T. Dixon, Jr.

One of my earliest childhood memories is of hearing the church bell toll for Sunday morning worship in the small, rural town in which I was raised. The Methodist Church was an old, wooden structure with a bell tower, two children's Sunday School classrooms cubby holed behind folding, wooden doors to separate it from the sanctuary, and a choir loft that housed the Sunday school classrooms for the older children. It stood less than two blocks from my home. As the bell rang, we would come together as a family, and make our weekly pilgrimage to the church.

In that rural setting from the 1950s, the three churches in the town of about 500 were the center of community life. The local Methodist Church, to which my family belonged, sponsored ice cream socials with hand-cranked, homemade ice cream, chicken potpie dinners, and corn roasts. My family and I were always involved in all three, but each came only once a year. In addition, there was a two-week community **Bible** school every June, and I was a regular attendee through my eighth grade year in school. However, Sunday morning worship and Sunday school were weekly events, and I strove to keep extending my collection of perfect attendance pins and of awards for memorizing **Bible** verses.

By my junior high school days, the local Methodist Church had closed, and we were attending the Methodist Church in the neighboring town, which was only slightly larger than the town in which I lived. There, my thoughts first began to focus on the ministry as a personal calling. I became active in the Methodist Youth Fellowship, and eventually served as both a district and a conference officer. I also became the regular "preacher" during the annual Youth Sunday service. My preaching began to draw community-wide attention, and before long I was occasionally filling pulpits at other churches, at a nursing home, and at various church-affiliated youth and ladies groups, where I typically set attendance records.

By age 17, when I began my freshman year at Harvard College, my decision to enter the ministry had solidified. During my freshman year, I enrolled in a two-semester course in comparative religion, which was taught by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, whose specific area of expertise was Islam. During that course, I gave far less attention to Islam, than I did to other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, as the latter two seemed so much more esoteric and strange to me. In contrast, Islam appeared to be somewhat similar to my own Christianity. As such, I didn't concentrate on it as much as I probably should have, although I can remember writing a term paper for the course on the concept of revelation in the **Qur'an**. Nonetheless, as the course was one of rigorous academic standards and demands, I did acquire a small library of

about a half dozen books on Islam, all of which were written by non-Muslims, and all of which were to serve me in good stead 25 years later. I also acquired two different English translations of the meaning of the **Qur'an**, which I read at the time.

That spring, Harvard named me a Hollis Scholar, signifying that I was one of the top pre-theology students in the college. The summer between my freshman and sophomore years at Harvard, I worked as a youth minister at a fairly large United Methodist Church. The following summer, I obtained my License to Preach from the United Methodist Church. Upon graduating from Harvard College in 1971, I enrolled at the Harvard Divinity School, and there obtained my Master of Divinity degree in 1974, having been previously ordained into the Deaconate of the United Methodist Church in 1972, and having previously received a Stewart Scholarship from the United Methodist Church as a supplement to my Harvard Divinity School scholarships. During my seminary education, I also completed a two-year externship program as a hospital chaplain at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. Following graduation from Harvard Divinity School, I spent the summer as the minister of two United Methodist churches in rural Kansas, where attendance soared to heights not seen in those churches for several years.

Seen from the outside, I was a very promising young minister, who had received an excellent education, drew large crowds to the Sunday morning worship service, and had been successful at every stop along the ministerial path. However, seen from the inside, I was fighting a constant war to maintain my personal integrity in the face of my ministerial responsibilities. This war was far removed from the ones presumably fought by some later televangelists in unsuccessfully trying to maintain personal sexual morality. Likewise, it was a far different war than those fought by the headline-grabbing pedophilic priests of the current moment. However, my struggle to maintain personal integrity may be the most common one encountered by the better-educated members of the ministry.

There is some irony in the fact that the supposedly best, brightest, and most idealistic of ministers-to-be are selected for the very best of seminary education, e.g. that offered at that time at the Harvard Divinity School. The irony is that, given such an education, the seminarian is exposed to as much of the actual historical truth as is known about : 1) the formation of the early, "mainstream" church, and how it was shaped by geopolitical considerations; 2) the "original" reading of various Biblical texts, many of which are in sharp contrast to what most Christians read when they pick up their **Bible**,

although gradually some of this information is being incorporated into newer and better translations; 3) the evolution of such concepts as a triune godhead and the "sonship" of Jesus, peace be upon him; 4) the non-religious considerations that underlie many Christian creeds and doctrines; 5) the existence of those early churches and Christian movements which never accepted the concept of a triune godhead, and which never accepted the concept of the divinity of Jesus, peace be upon him; and 6) etc. (Some of these fruits of my seminary education are recounted in more detail in my recent book, **The Cross and the Crescent: An Interfaith Dialogue between Christianity and Islam**, Amana Publications, 2001.)

As such, it is no real wonder that almost a majority of such seminary graduates leave seminary, not to "fill pulpits", where they would be asked to preach that which they know is not true, but to enter the various counseling professions. Such was also the case for me, as I went on to earn a master's and doctorate in clinical psychology. I continued to call myself a Christian, because that was a needed bit of self-identity, and because I was, after all, an ordained minister, even though my full time job was as a mental health professional. However, my seminary education had taken care of any belief I might have had regarding a triune godhead or the divinity of Jesus, peace be upon him. (Polls regularly reveal that ministers are less likely to believe these and other dogmas of the church than are the laity they serve, with ministers more likely to understand such terms as "son of God" metaphorically, while their parishioners understand it literally.) I thus became a "Christmas and Easter Christian", attending church very sporadically, and then gritting my teeth and biting my tongue as I listened to sermons espousing that which I knew was not the case.

None of the above should be taken to imply that I was any less religious or spiritually oriented than I had once been. I prayed regularly, my belief in a supreme deity remained solid and secure, and I conducted my personal life in line with the ethics I had once been taught in church and Sunday school. I simply knew better than to buy into the man-made dogmas and articles of faith of the organized church, which were so heavily laden with the pagan influences, polytheistic notions, and geo-political considerations of a bygone era.

As the years passed by, I became increasingly concerned about the loss of religiousness in American society at large. Religiousness is a living, breathing spirituality and morality within individuals, and should not be confused with religiosity, which is concerned with the rites, rituals, and formalized creeds of some organized entity, e.g. the church. American

culture increasingly appeared to have lost its moral and religious compass. Two out of every three marriages ended in divorce; violence was becoming an increasingly inherent part of our schools and our roads; self-responsibility was on the wane; self-discipline was being submerged by a "if it feels good, do it" morality; various Christian leaders and institutions were being swamped by sexual and financial scandals; and emotions justified behavior, however odious it might be.

American culture was becoming a morally bankrupt institution, and I was feeling quite alone in my personal religious vigil.

It was at this juncture that I began to come into contact with the local Muslim community. For some years before, my wife and I had been actively involved in doing research on the history of the Arabian horse. Eventually, in order to secure translations of various Arabic documents, this research brought us into contact with Arab Americans who happened to be Muslims. Our first such contact was with Jamal in the summer of 1991.

After an initial telephone conversation, Jamal visited our home, and offered to do some translations for us, and to help guide us through the history of the Arabian horse in the Middle East. Before Jamal left that afternoon, he asked if he might: use our bathroom to wash before saying his scheduled prayers; and borrow a piece of newspaper to use as a prayer rug, so he could say his scheduled prayers before leaving our house. We, of course, obliged, but wondered if there was something more appropriate that we could give him to use than a newspaper. Without our ever realizing it at the time, Jamal was practicing a very beautiful form of Dawa (preaching or exhortation). He made no comment about the fact that we were not Muslims, and he didn't preach anything to us about his religious beliefs. He "merely" presented us with his example, an example that spoke volumes, if one were willing to be receptive to the lesson.

Over the next 16 months, contact with Jamal slowly increased in frequency, until it was occurring on a biweekly to weekly basis. During these visits, Jamal never preached to me about Islam, never questioned me about my own religious beliefs or convictions, and never verbally suggested that I become a Muslim. However, I was beginning to learn a lot. First, there was the constant behavioral example of Jamal observing his scheduled prayers. Second, there was the behavioral example of how Jamal conducted his daily life in a highly moral and ethical manner, both in his business world and in his social world. Third, there was the behavioral example of how Jamal

interacted with his two children. For my wife, Jamal's wife provided a similar example. Fourth, always within the framework of helping me to understand Arabian horse history in the Middle East, Jamal began to share with me: 1) stories from Arab and Islamic history; 2) sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him; and 3) Qur'anic verses and their contextual meaning. In point of fact, our every visit now included at least a 30 minute conversation centered on some aspect of Islam, but always presented in terms of helping me intellectually understand the Islamic context of Arabian horse history. I was never told "this is the way things are", I was merely told "this is what Muslims typically believe". Since I wasn't being "preached to", and since Jamal never inquired as to my own beliefs, I didn't need to bother attempting to justify my own position. It was all handled as an intellectual exercise, not as proselytizing.

Gradually, Jamal began to introduce us to other Arab families in the local Muslim community. There was Wa'el and his family, Khalid and his family, and a few others. Consistently, I observed individuals and families who were living their lives on a much higher ethical plane than the American society in which we were all embedded. Maybe there was something to the practice of Islam that I had missed during my collegiate and seminary days.

By December, 1992, I was beginning to ask myself some serious questions about where I was and what I was doing. These questions were prompted by the following considerations. 1) Over the course of the prior 16 months, our social life had become increasingly centered on the Arab component of the local Muslim community. By December, probably 75% of our social life was being spent with Arab Muslims. 2) By virtue of my seminary training and education, I knew how badly the **Bible** had been corrupted (and often knew exactly when, where, and why), I had no belief in any triune godhead, and I had no belief in anything more than a metaphorical "son ship" of Jesus, peace be upon him. In short, while I certainly believed in God, I was as strict a monotheist as my Muslim friends. 3) My personal values and sense of morality were much more in keeping with my Muslim friends than with the "Christian" society around me. After all, I had the non-confrontational examples of Jamal, Khalid, and Wa'el as illustrations. In short, my nostalgic yearning for the type of community in which I had been raised was finding gratification in the Muslim community. American society might be morally bankrupt, but that did not appear to be the case for that part of the Muslim community with which I had had contact. Marriages were stable, spouses were committed to each other, and honesty, integrity, self-responsibility, and family values were emphasized. My wife and I had attempted to live our

lives that same way, but for several years I had felt that we were doing so in the context of a moral vacuum. The Muslim community appeared to be different. The different threads were being woven together into a single

strand. Arabian horses, my childhood upbringing, my foray into the Christian ministry and my seminary education, my nostalgic yearnings for a moral society, and my contact with the Muslim community were becoming intricately intertwined. My self-questioning came to a head when I finally got around to asking myself exactly what separated me from the beliefs of my Muslim friends. I suppose that I could have raised that question with Jamal or with Khalid, but I wasn't ready to take that step. I had never discussed my own religious beliefs with them, and I didn't think that I wanted to introduce that topic of conversation into our friendship. As such, I began to pull off the bookshelf all the books on Islam that I had acquired in my collegiate and seminary days. However far my own beliefs were from the traditional position of the church, and however seldom I actually attended church, I still identified myself as being a Christian, and so I turned to the works of Western scholars. That month of December, I read half a dozen or so books on Islam by Western scholars, including one biography of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Further, I began to read two different English translations of the meaning of the **Qur'an**. I never spoke to my Muslim friends about this personal quest of self-discovery. I never mentioned what types of books I was reading, nor ever spoke about why I was reading these books. However, occasionally I would run a very circumscribed question past one of them.

While I never spoke to my Muslim friends about those books, my wife and I had numerous conversations about what I was reading. By the last week of December of 1992, I was forced to admit to myself, that I could find no area of substantial disagreement between my own religious beliefs and the general tenets of Islam. While I was ready to acknowledge that Muhammad, peace be upon him, was a prophet of (one who spoke for or under the inspiration of) God, and while I had absolutely no difficulty affirming that there was no god besides God/Allah, glorified and exalted is He, I was still hesitating to make any decision. I could readily admit to myself that I had far more in common with Islamic beliefs as I then understood them, than I did with the traditional Christianity of the organized church. I knew only too well that I could easily confirm from my seminary training and education most of what the **Qur'an** had to say about Christianity, the **Bible**, and Jesus, peace be upon him. Nonetheless, I hesitated. Further, I rationalized my hesitation by maintaining to myself that I really didn't know the nitty-gritty

details of Islam, and that my areas of agreement were confined to general concepts. As such, I continued to read, and then to re-read.

One's sense of identity, of who one is, is a powerful affirmation of one's own position in the cosmos. In my professional practice, I had occasionally been called upon to treat certain addictive disorders, ranging from smoking, to alcoholism, to drug abuse. As a clinician, I knew that the basic physical addiction had to be overcome to create the initial abstinence. That was the easy part of treatment. As Mark Twain once said: "Quitting smoking is easy; I've done it hundreds of times". However, I also knew that the key to maintaining that abstinence over an extended time period was overcoming the client's psychological addiction, which was heavily grounded in the client's basic sense of identity, i.e. the client identified to himself that he was "a smoker", or that he was "a drinker", etc. The addictive behavior had become part and parcel of the client's basic sense of identity, of the client's basic sense of self. Changing this sense of identity was crucial to the maintenance of the psychotherapeutic "cure". This was the difficult part of treatment. Changing one's basic sense of identity is a most difficult task. One's psyche tends to cling to the old and familiar, which seem more psychologically comfortable and secure than the new and unfamiliar.

On a professional basis, I had the above knowledge, and used it on a daily basis. However, ironically enough, I was not yet ready to apply it to myself, and to the issue of my own hesitation surrounding my religious identity. For 43 years, my religious identity had been neatly labeled as "Christian", however many qualifications I might have added to that term over the years. Giving up that label of personal identity was no easy task. It was part and parcel of how I defined my very being. Given the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that my hesitation served the purpose of insuring that I could keep my familiar religious identity of being a Christian, although a Christian who believed like a Muslim believed.

It was now the very end of December, and my wife and I were filling out our application forms for U.S. passports, so that a proposed Middle Eastern journey could become a reality. One of the questions had to do with religious affiliation. I didn't even think about it, and automatically fell back on the old and familiar, as I penned in "Christian". It was easy, it was familiar, and it was comfortable.

However, that comfort was momentarily disrupted when my wife asked me how I had answered the question on religious identity on the application form. I immediately replied, "Christian", and chuckled audibly. Now, one of Freud's contributions to the understanding of the human psyche was his

realization that laughter is often a release of psychological tension. However wrong Freud may have been in many aspects of his theory of psychosexual development, his insights into laughter were quite on target. I had laughed! What was this psychological tension that I had need to release through the medium of laughter?

I then hurriedly went on to offer my wife a brief affirmation that I was a Christian, not a Muslim. In response to which, she politely informed me that she was merely asking whether I had written “Christian”, or “Protestant”, or “Methodist”. On a professional basis, I knew that a person does not defend himself against an accusation that hasn’t been made. (If, in the course of a session of psychotherapy, my client blurted out, “I’m not angry about that”, and I hadn’t even broached the topic of anger, it was clear that my client was feeling the need to defend himself against a charge that his own unconscious was making. In short, he really was angry, but he wasn’t ready to admit it or to deal with it.) If my wife hadn’t made the accusation, i.e. “you are a Muslim”, then the accusation had to have come from my own unconscious, as I was the only other person present. I was aware of this, but still I hesitated. The religious label that had been stuck to my sense of identity for 43 years was not going to come off easily.

About a month had gone by since my wife’s question to me. It was now late in January of 1993. I had set aside all the books on Islam by the Western scholars, as I had read them all thoroughly. The two English translations of the meaning of the **Qur’an** were back on the bookshelf, and I was busy reading yet a third English translation of the meaning of the **Qur’an**. Maybe in this translation I would find some sudden justification for…

I was taking my lunch hour from my private practice at a local Arab restaurant that I had started to frequent. I entered as usual, seated myself at a small table, and opened my third English translation of the meaning of the **Qur’an** to where I had left off in my reading. I figured I might as well get some reading done over my lunch hour. Moments later, I became aware that Mahmoud was at my shoulder, and waiting to take my order. He glanced at what I was reading, but said nothing about it. My order taken, I returned to the solitude of my reading.

A few minutes later, Mahmoud’s wife, Iman, an American Muslim, who wore the Hijab (scarf) and modest dress that I had come to associate with female Muslims, brought me my order. She commented that I was reading the **Qur’an**, and politely asked if I were a Muslim. The word was out of my mouth before it could be modified by any social etiquette or politeness: “No!” That single word was said forcefully, and with more than a hint of

irritability. With that, Iman politely retired from my table.

What was happening to me? I had behaved rudely and somewhat aggressively. What had this woman done to deserve such behavior from me? This wasn't like me. Given my childhood upbringing, I still used "sir" and "ma'am" when addressing clerks and cashiers who were waiting on me in stores. I could pretend to ignore my own laughter as a release of tension, but I couldn't begin to ignore this sort of unconscionable behavior from myself. My reading was set aside, and I mentally stewed over this turn of events throughout my meal. The more I stewed, the guiltier I felt about my behavior. I knew that when Iman brought me my check at the end of the meal, I was going to need to make some amends. If for no other reason, simple politeness demanded it. Furthermore, I was really quite disturbed about how resistant I had been to her innocuous question. What was going on in me that I responded with that much force to such a simple and straightforward question? Why did that one, simple question lead to such atypical behavior on my part?

Later, when Iman came with my check, I attempted a round-about apology by saying: "I'm afraid I was a little abrupt in answering your question before. If you were asking me whether I believe that there is only one God, then my answer is yes. If you were asking me whether I believe that Muhammad was one of the prophets of that one God, then my answer is yes." She very nicely and very supportively said: "That's okay; it takes some people a little longer than others."

Perhaps, the readers of this will be kind enough to note the psychological games I was playing with myself without chuckling too hard at my mental gymnastics and behavior. I well knew that in my own way, using my own words, I had just said the Shahadah, the Islamic testimonial of faith, i.e. "I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". However, having said that, and having recognized what I said, I could still cling to my old and familiar label of religious identity. After all, I hadn't said I was a Muslim. I was simply a Christian, albeit an atypical Christian, who was willing to say that there was one God, not a triune godhead, and who was willing to say that Muhammad was one of the prophets inspired by that one God. If a Muslim wanted to accept me as being a Muslim that was his or her business, and his or her label of religious identity. However, it was not mine. I thought I had found my way out of my crisis of religious identity. I was a Christian, who would carefully explain that I agreed with, and was willing to testify to, the Islamic

testimonial of faith. Having made my tortured explanation, and having parsed the English language to within an inch of its life, others could hang whatever label on me they wished. It was their label, and not mine.

It was now March of 1993, and my wife and I were enjoying a five-week vacation in the Middle East. It was also the Islamic month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from day break until sunset. Because we were so often staying with or being escorted around by family members of our Muslim friends back in the States, my wife and I had decided that we also would fast, if for no other reason than common courtesy. During this time, I had also started to perform the five daily prayers of Islam with my newfound, Middle Eastern, Muslim friends. After all, there was nothing in those prayers with which I could disagree.

I was a Christian, or so I said. After all, I had been born into a Christian family, had been given a Christian upbringing, had attended church and Sunday school every Sunday as a child, had graduated from a prestigious seminary, and was an ordained minister in a large Protestant denomination. However, I was also a Christian: who didn't believe in a triune godhead or in the divinity of Jesus, peace be upon him; who knew quite well how the **Bible** had been corrupted; who had said the Islamic testimony of faith in my own carefully parsed words; who had fasted during Ramadan; who was saying Islamic prayers five times a day; and who was deeply impressed by the behavioral examples I had witnessed in the Muslim community, both in America and in the Middle East. (Time and space do not permit me the luxury of documenting in detail all of the examples of personal morality and ethics I encountered in the Middle East.) If asked if I were a Muslim, I could and did do a five-minute monologue detailing the above, and basically leaving the question unanswered. I was playing intellectual word games, and succeeding at them quite nicely.

It was now late in our Middle Eastern trip. An elderly friend who spoke no English and I were walking down a winding, little road, somewhere in one of the economically disadvantaged areas of greater 'Amman, Jordan. As we walked, an elderly man approached us from the opposite direction, said, "Salam 'Alaykum", i.e., "peace be upon you", and offered to shake hands. We were the only three people there. I didn't speak Arabic, and neither my friend nor the stranger spoke English. Looking at me, the stranger asked, "Muslim?"

At that precise moment in time, I was fully and completely trapped. There were no intellectual word games to be played, because I could only communicate in English, and they could only communicate in Arabic. There

was no translator present to bail me out of this situation, and to allow me to hide behind my carefully prepared English monologue. I couldn't pretend I didn't understand the question, because it was all too obvious that I had. My choices were suddenly, unpredictably, and inexplicably reduced to just two: I could say "N'am", i.e., "yes"; or I could say "La", i.e., "no". The choice was mine, and I had no other. I had to choose, and I had to choose now; it was just that simple. Praise be to Allah, I answered, "N'am".

With saying that one word, all the intellectual word games were now behind me. With the intellectual word games behind me, the psychological games regarding my religious identity were also behind me. I wasn't some strange, atypical Christian. I was a Muslim. Praise be to Allah, my wife of 33 years also became a Muslim about that same time.

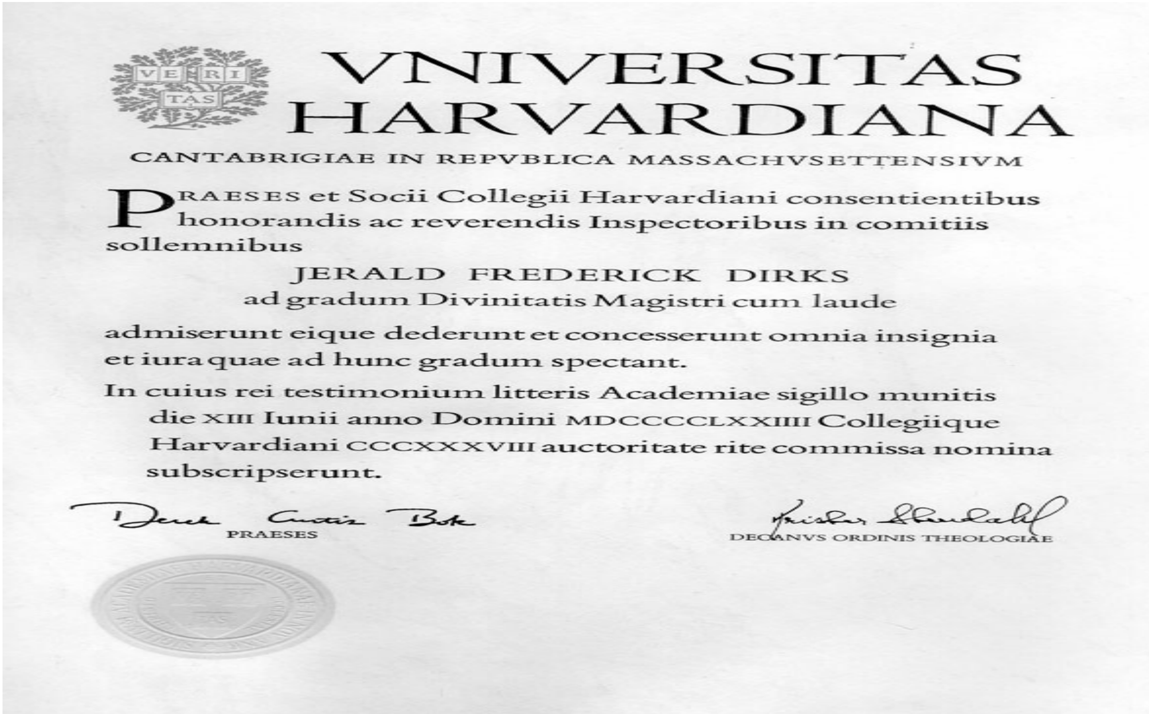
Not too many months after our return to America from the Middle East, a neighbor invited us over to his house, saying that he wanted to talk with us about our conversion to Islam. He was a retired Methodist minister, with whom I had had several conversations in the past. Although we had occasionally talked superficially about such issues as the artificial construction of the **Bible** from various, earlier, independent sources, we had never had any in-depth conversation about religion. I knew only that he appeared to have acquired a solid seminary education, and that he sang in the local church choir every Sunday.

My initial reaction was, "Oh, oh, here it comes". Nonetheless, it is a Muslim's duty to be a good neighbor, and it is a Muslim's duty to be willing to discuss Islam with others. As such, I accepted the invitation for the following evening, and spent most of the waking part of the next 24 hours contemplating how best to approach this gentleman in his requested topic of conversation. The appointed time came, and we drove over to our neighbor's. After a few moments of small talk, he finally asked why I had decided to become a Muslim. I had waited for this question, and had my answer carefully prepared. "As you know with your seminary education, there were a lot of non-religious considerations which led up to and shaped the decisions of the Council of Nicaea." He immediately cut me off with a simple statement: "You finally couldn't stomach the polytheism anymore, could you?" He knew exactly why I was a Muslim, and he didn't disagree with my decision! For himself, at his age and at his place in life, he was electing to be "an atypical Christian". Allah willing, he has by now completed his journey from cross to crescent.

There are sacrifices to be made in being a Muslim in America. For that matter, there are sacrifices to be made in being a Muslim anywhere.

However, those sacrifices may be more acutely felt in America, especially among American converts. Some of those sacrifices are very predictable, and include altered dress and abstinence from alcohol, pork, and the taking of interest on one's money. Some of those sacrifices are less predictable. For example, one Christian family, with whom we were close friends, informed us that they could no longer associate with us, as they could not associate with anyone "who does not take Jesus Christ as his personal savior". In addition, quite a few of my professional colleagues altered their manner of relating to me. Whether it was coincidence or not, my professional referral base dwindled, and there was almost a 30% drop in income as a result. Some of these less predictable sacrifices were hard to accept, although the sacrifices were a small price to pay for what was received in return.

For those contemplating the acceptance of Islam and the surrendering of oneself to Allah—glorified and exalted is He, there may well be sacrifices along the way. Many of these sacrifices are easily predicted, while others may be rather surprising and unexpected. There is no denying the existence of these sacrifices, and I don't intend to sugar coat that pill for you. Nonetheless, don't be overly troubled by these sacrifices. In the final analysis, these sacrifices are less important than you presently think. Allah willing, you will find these sacrifices a very cheap coin to pay for the "goods" you are purchasing.



VNIVERSITAS HARVARDIANA

CANTABRIGIAE IN REPVBLICA MASSACHVSETTENSIVM

PRAESES et Socii Collegii Harvardiani consentientibus honorandis ac reverendis Inspectoribus in comitiis sollemnibus

JERALD FREDERICK DIRKS

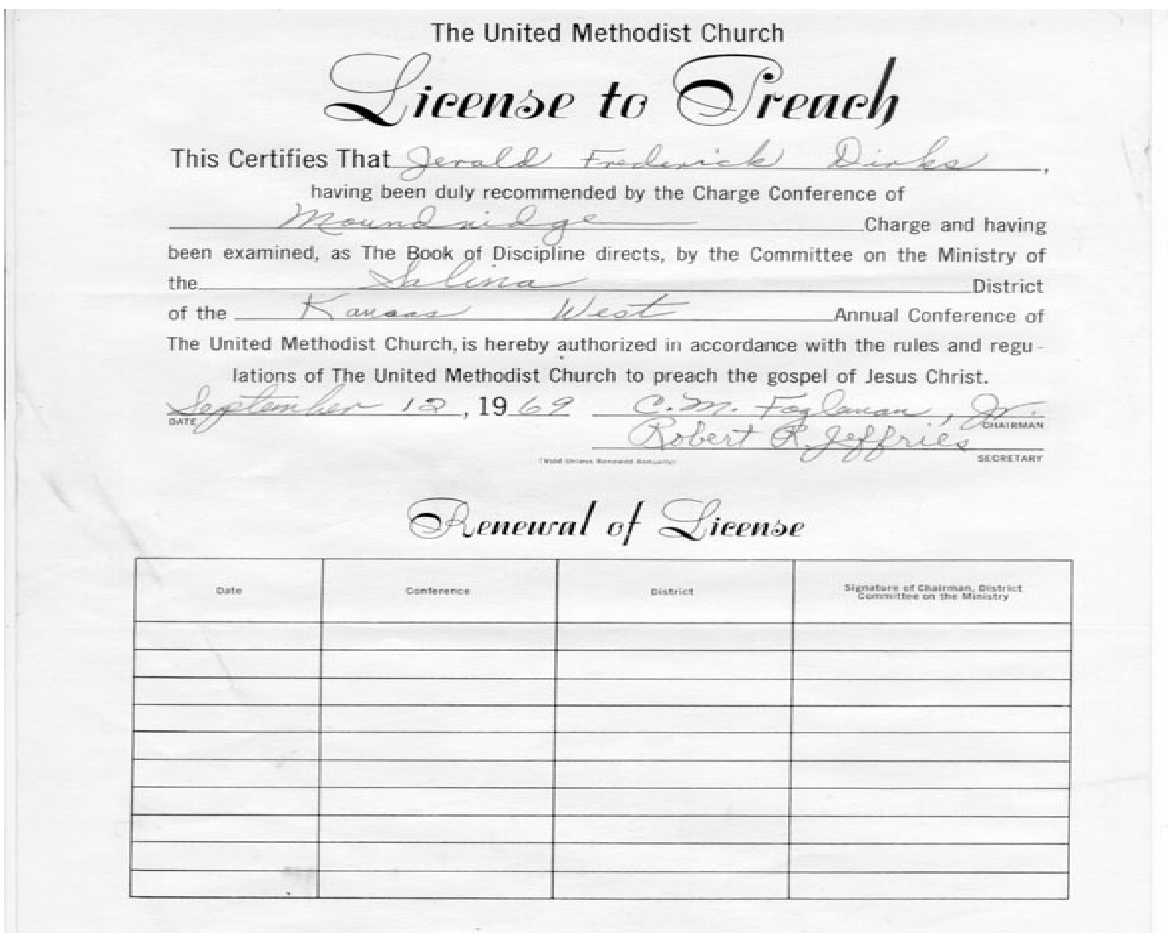
ad gradum Divinitatis Magistri cum laude

admiserunt eique dederunt et concesserunt omnia insignia et iura quae ad hunc gradum spectant.

In cuius rei testimonium litteris Academiae sigillo munitis die XIII Iunii anno Domini MDCCCCLXXIIII Collegiique Harvardiani CCCXXXVIII auctoritate rite commissa nomina subscripserunt.

PRAESES

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The United Methodist Church

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September 12, 1969 C. M. Foglanan, Jr.

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THE METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE PRINTED IN U.S.A.

4-Sister Khadijah "Sue" Watson Former pastor, missionary, professor. Master's degree in Divinity. (USA –Philippines).

"What happened to you?" This was usually the first reaction I encountered when my former classmates, friends and co-pastors saw me after having embraced Islam. I suppose I couldn't blame them, I was a highly unlikely the person to change religions. Formerly, I was a professor, pastor, church planter and missionary. If anyone was a radical fundamentalist it was I.

I had just graduated with my Master's Degree of Divinity from an elite seminary five months before. It was after that time I met a lady who had worked in Saudi Arabia and had embraced Islam. Of course I asked her about the treatment of women in Islam. I was shocked at her answer, it wasn't what I expected so I proceeded to ask other questions relating to Allah and Muhammad peace be upon him (pbuh). She informed me that she would take me to the Islamic Center where they would be better able to answer my questions.

Being prayed up, meaning-asking Jesus for protection against demon spirits seeing that what we had been taught about Islam is that it is Demonic and Satanic religion. Having taught Evangelism I was quite shocked at their approach, it was direct and straightforward. No intimidation, no harassment, no psychological manipulation, no subliminal influence! None of this, "let's have a Qur'anic study in your house", like a counter part of the Bible study. I couldn't believe it! They gave me some books and told me if I had some questions they were available to answer them in the office. That night I read all of the books they gave. It was the first time I had ever read a book about Islam written by a Muslim, we had studied and read books about Islam only written by Christians. The next day I spent three hours at the office asking questions. This went on everyday for a week, by which time I had read twelve books and knew why Muslims are the hardest people in the world to convert to Christianity. Why? Because there is nothing to offer them!! (In Islam) There is a relationship with Allah, forgiveness of sins, salvation and promise of Eternal Life.

Naturally, my first question centered on the deity of Allah. Who is this Allah that the Muslims worship? We had been taught as Christians that this is another god, a false god. When in fact He is the Omniscient-All Knowing, Omnipotent-All Powerful, and Omnipresent-All Present God. The One and Only without co-partners or co-equal. It is interesting to note that there were bishops during the first three hundred years of the Church that were teaching

as the Muslims that Jesus (pbuh) was a prophet and not son of God !! It was only after the conversion of Emperor Constantine that he was the one to call and introduce the doctrine of the Trinity. He a convert to Christianity who knew nothing of this religion introduced a paganistic concept that goes back to Babylonian times. Because the space does not permit me to go into detail about the subject insha'Allah, another time. Only I must point out that the word TRINITY is not found in the Bible in any of its many translation nor is it found in the original Greek or Hebrew languages!

My other important question centered on Muhammad (pbuh). Who is this Muhammad? I found out that Muslims do not pray to him like the Christians pray to Jesus. He is not an intermediary and in fact it is forbidden to pray to him. We ask blessing upon him at the end of our prayer but likewise we ask blessings on Abraham. He is a Prophet and a Messenger, the final and last Prophet. In fact, until now, one thousand four hundred and eighteen years (1,418) later there has been no prophet after him. His message is for All Mankind as opposed to the message of Jesus or Moses (peace be upon them both) which was sent to the Jews. "Hear O Israel" But the message is the same message of Allah. "The Lord Your God is One God and you shall have no other gods before Me."(Mark 12:29).

Because prayer was a very important part of my Christian life I was both interested and curious to know what the Muslims were praying. As Christians we were as ignorant on this aspect of Muslim belief as on the other aspects. We thought and were taught, that the Muslims were bowing down to the Ka'bah (in Mecca), that was there god and center point of this false deity. Again, I was shocked to learn that the manner of prayer is prescribed by God, Himself. The words of the prayer are one of praise and exaltation. The approach to prayer (ablution or washing) in cleanliness is under the direction of Allah. He is a Holy God and it is not for us to approach Him in an arbitrary manner but only reasonable that He should tell us how we should approach Him.

At the end of that week after having spent eight (8) years of formal theological studies I knew cognitively (head knowledge) that Islam was true. But I did not embrace Islam at that time because I did not believe it in my heart. I continued to pray, to read the Bible, to attend lectures at the Islamic Center. I was in earnest asking and seeking God's direction. It is not easy to change your religion. I did not want to loose my salvation if there was salvation to loose. I continued to be shocked and amazed at what I was learning because it was not what I was taught that Islam believed. In my

Master's level, the professor I had was respected as an authority on Islam yet his teaching and that of Christianity in general is full of Misunderstanding. He and many Christians like him are sincere but they are sincerely wrong.

Two months later after having once again prayed seeking God's direction, I felt something drop into my being! I sat up, and it was the first time I was to use the name of Allah, and I said, "Allah, I believe you are the One and Only True God." There was peace that descended upon me and from that day four years ago until now I have never regretted embracing Islam. This decision did not come without trial. I was fired from my job as I was teaching in two Bible Colleges at that time, ostracized by my former classmates, professors and co-pastors, disowned by my husband's family, misunderstood by my adult children and made a suspicion by my own government. Without the faith that enables man to stand up to Satanic forces I would not have been able to withstand all of this. I am ever so grateful to Allah that I am a Muslim and may I live and die a Muslim.

"Truly, my prayer, my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are all for God the Cherisher of the Worlds. No partner has He, this I am commanded. And I am the first of those who bow to Allah in Islam." (Noble.Qur'aan.6:162-163)
Sister Khadijah Watson is working as a teacher for women in one of the Da'wah (Invitation to Islam) Centers in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudia Arabia

5-Ibrahim Khalil Ahmed (Ibrahim Khalil Philobus) Former Coptic priest and missionary (Egypt).

Al-Hajj Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, formerly Ibrahim Khalil Philobus, was an Egyptian Coptic priest who studied theology and got a high degree from Princeton University. He studied Islam to find gaps to attack it; instead he embraced Islam with his four children, one of whom is now a brilliant professor in Sorbonne University, Paris France. In an interesting way, he reveals himself saying: "I was born in Alexandria on the 13th of January 1919 and was sent to the American Mission schools until I got my secondary education certificate there. In 1942 I got my diploma from Asiout University and then I specialized in religious studies as a prelude to join the Faculty of Theology. It was no easy task to join the faculty, as no candidate could join it unless he got a special recommendation from the church, and also, after he should pass a number of difficult exams. I got a recommendation from Al-Attareen Church in Alexandria and another from the Church Assembly of Lower Egypt after passing many tests to know my qualifications to become a man of religion. Then I got a third recommendation from Snodus Church Assembly which included priests from Sudan and Egypt.

The Snodus sanctioned my entrance into the Faculty of Theology in 1944 as a boarding student. There I studied at the hands of American and Egyptian teachers until my graduation in 1948.

I was supposed, he continued, to be appointed in Jerusalem had it not been for the war that broke out in Palestine that same year, so I was sent to Esna in Upper Egypt. That same year I registered for a thesis at the American University in Cairo. It was about the missionary activities among Muslims. My acquaintance with Islam started in the Faculty of Theology where I studied Islam and all the methods through which we could shake the faith of Muslims and raise misconceptions in their understanding of their own religion.

In 1952 I got my M.A. from Princeton University in U.S.A. and was appointed as a teacher in the Faculty of Theology in Asiout. I used to teach Islam in the faculty as well as the faulty misconceptions spread by its enemies and the missionaries against it. During that period I decided to enlarge my study of Islam, so that I should not read the missionaries books on it only. I had so much faith in myself that I was confirmed to read the other point of view. Thus I began to read books written by Muslim authors. I also decided to read the Quran and understand its meanings. This was implied by my love of knowledge and moved by my desire to add more

proofs against Islam. The result was, however, exactly the reverse. My position began to shake and I started to feel an internal strong struggle and I discovered the falsehood of everything I had studied and preached to the people. But I could not face myself bravely and tried instead to overcome this internal crisis and continue my work.

In 1954, Mr. Khalil added, I was sent to Aswan as secretary general of the German Swiss Mission. That was only my apparent position for my real mission was to preach against Islam in Upper Egypt especially among Muslims. A missionary conference was held at that time at Cataract Hotel in Aswan and I was given the floor to speak. That day I spoke too much, reiterating all the repeated misconceptions against Islam; and at the end of my speech, the internal crisis came to me again and I started to revise my position.

Continuing his talk about the said crisis, Mr. Khalil said, “I began to ask myself: Why should I say and do all these things which I know for sure I am a liar, as this is not the truth? I took my leave before the end of the conference and went out alone to my house. I was completely shaken. As I walked through Firyal public garden, I heard a verse of the Quran on the radio. It said: ‘Say: It has been revealed to me that a company of Jinns listened (to the Quran). They said: We have really heard a wonderful recital! It gives guidance to the Right, and we have believed therein: We shall not join (in worship) any gods with our Lord.’ (Quran S72v1-2) ‘And as for us, since we have listened to the Guidance, we have accepted it: and any one who believes in His Lord, has no fear of either a short (account) or of any injustice.’ (Quran S.72 V.13)

I felt a deep comfort that night and when I returned home I spent the whole night all by myself in my library reading the Quran. My wife inquired from me about the reason of my sitting up all night and I pleaded from her to leave me alone. I stopped for a long time thinking and meditating on the verse; ‘Had We sent down this Quran on a mountain, verily thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah.’ (S.59 V.21) And the verse: ‘Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt thou find the Jews and the Pagans, and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, "We are Christians": Because amongst these are men devoted to learning. And men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: They pray: "Our Lord! We believe, write us down among the witnesses. What cause can we have not to believe in Allah

and the truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous?' (Quran S.5 V.82-84)

Mr. Khalil then quoted a third quotation from the Holy Quran which says: 'Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures), in the Taurat and in the Gospel; for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them what is bad (and impure): He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him and follow the light which is sent down with him, it is they who will prosper. Say: O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: It is He that giveth both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger. The unlettered Prophet, who believeth in Allah and His Words: follow Him that (so) you may be guided.' (Quran S.7 V.157- 158)

Now that same night, Mr. Khalil dramatically concluded: "I took my final decision. In the morning I spoke with my wife from whom I have three sons and one daughter. But no sooner than she felt that I was inclined to embrace Islam than she cried and asked for help from the head of the mission. His name was Monsieur Shavits from Switzerland. He was a very cunning man. When he asked me about my true attitude, I told him frankly what I really wanted and then he said: Regard yourself out of job until we discover what has befallen you. Then I said: This is my resignation from my job. He tried to convince me to postpone it, but I insisted. So he made a rumor among the people that I became mad. Thus I suffered a very severe test and oppression until I left Aswan for good and returned to Cairo."

When he was asked about the circumstances to his conversion he replied: "In Cairo I was introduced to a respectable professor who helped me overcome my severe trial and this he did without knowing anything about my story. He treated me as a Muslim for I introduced myself to him as such although until then I did not embrace Islam officially. That was Dr. Muhammad Abdul Moneim Al Jamal the then undersecretary of treasury. He was highly interested in Islamic studies and wanted to make a translation of the Holy Quran to be published in America. He asked me to help him because I was fluent in English since I had got my M.A. from an American University. He also knew that I was preparing a comparative study of the Quran, the Torah and the Bible.

We cooperated in this comparative study and in the translation of the Quran.

When Dr. Jamal knew that I had resigned from my job in Aswan and that I was then unemployed, he helped me with a job in Standard Stationery Company in Cairo. So I was well established after a short while. I did not tell my wife about my intention to embrace Islam thus she thought that I had forgotten the whole affair and that it was nothing but a transitory crisis that no more existed. But I knew quite well that my official conversion to Islam needs long complicated measures and it was in fact a battle which I preferred to postpone for some time until I became well off and after I completed my comparative study."

Then Mr. Khalil continued, "In 1955 I did complete my study and my material and living affairs became well established. I resigned from the company and set up a training office for importing stationery and school articles. It was a successful business from which I gained much more money than I needed. Thus I decided to declare my official conversion to Islam. On the 25th of December 1959, I sent a telegram to Dr. Thompson, head of the American Mission in Egypt informing him that I had embraced Islam. When I told my true story to Dr. Jamal he was completely astonished. When I declared my conversion to Islam, new troubles began. Seven of my former colleagues in the mission had tried their best to persuade me to cancel my declaration, but I refused. They threatened to separate me from my wife and I said: She is free to do as she wishes. They threatened to kill me. But when they found me to be stubborn they left me alone and sent to me an old friend of mine who was also a colleague of mine in the mission. He wept very much in front of me. So I recited before him the following verses from the Quran: 'And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: They pray: "Our Lord! We believe, write us down among the witnesses. What cause can we have not to believe in Allah and the truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous?'. (Quran S.5 V.84) I said to him, "You should have wept in humiliation to God on hearing the Quran and believe in the truth which you know but you refuse. He stood up and left me as he saw no use. My official conversion to Islam was in January 1960."

Mr. Khalil was then asked about the attitude of his wife and children and he answered: "My wife left me at that time and took with her all the furniture of our house. But all my children joined me and embraced Islam. The most enthusiastic among them was my eldest son Isaac who changed his name to Osman, then my second son Joseph and my son Samuel whose name is

Jamal and daughter Majida who is now called Najwa. Osman is now a doctor of philosophy working as a professor in Sorbonne University in Paris teaching oriental studies and psychology. He also writes in 'Le Monde' magazine. As in regards to my wife, she left the house for six years and agreed to come back in 1966 provided that she keeps her religion. I accepted this because in Islam there is no compulsion in religion. I said to her: I do not want you to became a Muslim for my sake but only after you are convinced. She feels now that she believes in Islam but she cannot declare this for fear of her family but we treat her as a Muslim woman and she fasts in Ramadan because all my children pray and fast. My daughter Najwa is a student in the Faculty of Commerce, Joseph is a doctor pharmacologist and Jamal is an engineer.

During this period, that is since 1961 until the present time I have been able to publish a number of books on Islam and the methods of the missionaries and the orientalists against it. I am now preparing a comparative study about women in the three Divine religions with the object of highlighting the status of women in Islam. In 1973 I performed Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and I am doing activities preaching Islam. I hold seminars in the universities and charitable societies. I received an invitation from Sudan in 1974 where I held many seminars. "My time is fully used in the service of Islam and thanks to Allah because with my efforts many Priests and people reverted to Islam".

Finally Mr. Khalil was asked about the salient features of Islam which have attracted his attention most. And he answered: "My faith in Islam has been brought about through reading the Holy Quran and the biography of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. I no longer believed in the misconceptions against Islam and I am especially attracted by the concept of unity of God, which is the most important feature of Islam. God is only One. Nothing is like Him. This belief makes me the servant of God only and of no one else. Oneness of God liberates man from servitude to any human being and that is true freedom.

I also like very much the rule of forgiveness in Islam and the direct relationship between God and His servants.

'Say: O my servants who have transgressed against their souls!, despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. Turn ye to your Lord (in repentance) and submit to Him before the Chastisement comes on you: After that ye shall not be helped.' (Quran S.39 V.53-54)

Source: The Islamic Bulletin, San Francisco, CA 94141-0186

6- Martin John Mwaipopo Former Lutheran Archbishop (Tanzania).

(It was December 23, 1986, two days away from Christmas, when Arch Bishop Martin John Mwaipopo, announced to his congregation that **he was leaving Christianity for Islam**.

The congregation was paralysed with shock on hearing the news, so much so, that his administrator got up from his seat, closed the door and windows, and declared to the church members that the Bishop's mind had become unhinged, that is, he had gone mad. How could he not think and say so, when only a few minutes earlier, the man had taken out his music instruments and sang so movingly for the church members? Little did they know that inside the Bishop's heart lay a decision that would blow their minds, and that the entertainment was only a farewell party. But the congregant's reaction was equally shocking! They called the police to take the "mad" man away. He was kept in the cells until midnight when Sheikh Ahmed Sheik, the man who initiated him into Islam came to bail him out. That incident was only a mild beginning of shocks in store for him. Al Qalam reporter, Simphiwe Sesanti, spoke to the Tanzanian born former Lutheran Arch Bishop Martin John Mwaipopo, who on embracing Islam came to be known as Al Hajj Abu Bakr John Mwaipopo)

Credit must go to the Zimbabwean brother, Sufyan Sabelo, for provoking this writer's curiosity, after listening to Mwaipopo's talk at the Wyebank Islamic Centre, Durban. Sufyan is not sensationalist, but that night he must have heard something - he just could not stop talking about the man! Who would not be hooked after hearing that an Arch Bishop, who had not only obtained a BA and Masters degree, but a doctorate as well, in Divinity, had later turned to Islam? And since foreign qualifications matter so much to you, a man who had obtained a diploma in Church Administration in England and the latter degrees in Berlin, Germany! A man, who, before becoming a Muslim, had been the World Council of Churches' General Secretary for Eastern Africa - covering Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, and parts of Ethiopia and Somalia. In the Council of Churches, he rubbed shoulders with the present chairman of the South African Human Rights Commission . Barney Pityana and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 's chairman, Bishop Desmond Tutu.

It is a story of a man who was born 61 years ago, on February 22 in Bukabo, an area that shares its borders with Uganda. Two years, after his birth, his family had him baptised, and five years later, watched him with pride being

an alter boy . Seeing him assisting the church minister, preparing the "body and blood" of Christ , filled the Mwaipopos with pride, and filled Mwaipopo Senior with ideas for his son's future.

"When I was in a boarding school, later , my father wrote to me, stating he wanted me to become a priest. In each and every letter he wrote this" , recalls Abu Bakr. But he had his own ideas about his life, which was joining the police force. But at the age of 25, Mwaipopo gave in to his father's will. Unlike in Europe where children can do as they will after age 21 , in Africa , children are taught to honour their parent's will above their own.

"My , son , before I close my eyes (die), I would be glad if you could become a priest", that's how father told son, and that's how the son was moved, a move that saw him going to England in 1964, to do a diploma in Church Administration, and a year later to Germany to do a B.A degree. On returning, a year later, he was made acting Bishop.

Later, he went back to do Masters. " All this time, I was just doing things, without questioning . It was when he began to do his doctorate , that he started questioning things. "I started wondering … there is Christianity, Islam, Judaism Buddhism each different religions claiming to the true religion. What is the truth? I wanted the truth" , says Mwaipopo. So began his search , until he reduced it to the "major" four religions. He got himself a copy of the Qur'an, and guess what?

" When I opened the Qur'an , the first verses I came across were, ' Say : He is Allah , The One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor was He begotten; And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him? (Surah Ikhlas)' ", he recalls. That was when the seeds of Islam, unknown to him, were first sown. It was then that he discovered that the Qur'an was the only scripture book that had been untampered with, by human beings since its revelation . "And in concluding my doctoral thesis I said so. I didn't care whether they give me my doctorate or not - that was the truth, and I was looking for the truth."

While in that state of mind he called his "beloved" Professor Van Burger.

"I closed the door, looked him in the eye and asked him 'of all religions in the world, which is the true religion', I asked.'Islam', he responded".

'Why then are you not a Muslim? I asked again.

He said to me "'One, I hate Arabs, and two, do you see all this luxuries that I have? Do you think that I would give it all up for Islam?'. When I thought about his answer, I thought about my own situation, too", recalls Mwaipopo. His mission, his cars - all these appeared in his imagination. No, he could not embrace Islam, and for one good year, he put it off his mind. But then dreams haunted him, the verses of the Quran kept on appearing, people clad in white kept on coming, "especially on Fridays", until he could take it no more.

So, on December 22, he officially embraced Islam. These dreams that guided him - were they not due to the "superstitious" nature of the Africans? "No, I don't believe that all dreams are bad. There are those that guide you in the right direction and those which don't, and these ones, in particular, guided me in the right direction, to Islam", he tells us.

Consequently, the church stripped him of his house and his car. His wife could not take it, she packed her clothes, took her children and left, despite Mwaipopo's assurances that she was not obliged to become a Muslim. When he went to his parents, they, too, had heard the story. "My father told me to denounce Islam and my mother said she did not "want to hear any nonsense from me", remember Mwaipopo. He was on his own! Asked how he now feels towards his parents, he says that he has forgiven them, in fact found time to reconcile with his father before he departed to the world yonder.

"They were just old people who did not know. They could not even read the Bible…all they knew was what they had heard the priest reading", he states. After asking to stay for one night, the following day, he began his journey to where his family had originally come from, Kyela, near the borders between Tanzania and Malawi. His parents had settled in Kilosa, Morogoro. During his journey, he was stranded in Busale, by one family that was selling home brewed beer. It was there that he met his future wife, a Catholic Nun, by the name of Sister Gertrude Kibweya, now known as Sister Zainab. It was with her that he travelled to Kyela, where the old man, who had given him shelter the previous night had told him that that's where he would find other Muslims. But before that, in the morning of that day he had made the call to prayer (azaan), something which made the villagers come out, asking his host why he was keeping a "mad" man. "It was the Nun who explained that I

was not mad but a Muslim", he says. It was the same Nun who later helped Mwaipopo pay his medical fees at the Anglican Mission Hospital, when he had become terribly sick, thanks to the conversation he had had with her.

The story goes that he had asked her why she was wearing a rosary, to which she responded that it was because Christ was hanged on it. "But, say, someone had killed your father with a gun, would you go around carrying a gun on your chest?" Mmmhhh. That set the Nun thinking, her mind "challenged", and when the former Bishop proposed marriage to the Nun later, the answer was "yes". Secretly, they married, and four weeks later, she wrote a letter to her authorities, informing them of her leave. When the old man who had given him shelter, (the Nun's uncle) heard about the marriage, when they arrived at his house, they were advised to leave the house, because "the old man was loading his gun", and the Nun's father was enraged, "wild like a lion".

From the Bishop's mansion, Mwaipopo went to live in a self built mud house. From earning a living as the World Council of Churches' General Secretary for Eastern Africa, he began earning a living as a wood cutter and tilling some people's lands. When not doing that he was preaching Islam publicly. This led to a series of short term imprisonments for preaching blasphemy against Christianity.

While on hajj in 1988, tragedy struck. His house was bombed, and consequently, his infant triplets were killed. "A bishop, whose mother and my own mother were children of the same father, was involved in the plot', recalls Mwaipopo. He says instead of demoralising him, it did the opposite, as the numbers of people embracing Islam, increased, this including his father in law.

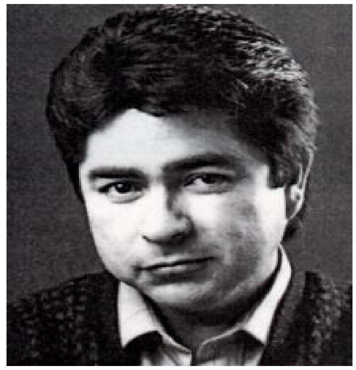
He says that that very day he was released, police came to re-arrest him. And guess what? "The women said no ways! They said that they would resist my arrest physically against the police. It was also the women who helped me cross the borders unnoticed. They clothed me in the women's fashion!", according to Mwaipopo. And that is one of the reasons that make him admire women.

"Women must be given a high place, they must be given good education in Islam. Otherwise how would she understand why a man marries more than one wife…It was my wife, Zainab, who proposed that I should marry my second wife, Shela, (her friend), when she had to go for Islamic studies abroad", it's the bishop who says so. Yah?

To the Muslims, Al Hajj Abu Bakr Mwaipopo's message is, "There is war against Islam…Flood the world with literature. Right now, Muslims are made to feel ashamed to be regarded as fundamentalists. Muslims must stop their individualistic tendencies. They must be collective.

Source: http://mandla.co.za/al-qalam/sept97/bishop.htm

7- Raphael Narbaez Former Jehovah's Witness Minister (USA).



A forty-two-year-old Latino, Raphael, is a Los Angeles-based comic and lecturer. He was born in Texas where he attended his first Jehovah's Witness meeting at age six. He gave his first Bible sermon at eight, tended his own congregation at twenty, and was headed for a position of leadership among the 904,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States. But he traded in his Bible for a Qur'an after having braved a visit to a local mosque.

On November 1, 1991, he embraced Islam, bringing to the Muslim community the organizational and speaking skills he developed among Jehovah's Witnesses. He speaks with the urgency of a new convert, but one who can make immigrant Muslims laugh at themselves.

He told his story mimicking a cast of characters. I remember vividly being in a discussion where we were all sitting in my parents' living room and there were some other Jehovah's Witnesses there. They were talking about : "It's Armageddon! The time of the end! And Christ is coming! And you know the hailstones are going to be out here as big as cars! God is going to use all kinds of things to destroy this wicked system and remove the governments! And the Bible talks about the earth opening up! It's going to swallow whole city blocks!"

I'm scared to death! And then my mother turned around: "See what's going to happen to you if you don't get baptized, and if you don't do God's will? The earth is going to swallow you up, or one of these huge hailstones is going to hit you on the head [klonk], knock you out, and you will not exist ever again. I'll have to make another child."

I wasn't going to take a chance of being hit by one of those big hailstones. So I got baptized. And of course Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe in the

sprinkling of the water. They submerge you completely, hold you there for a second, and then bring you back up.

I did that at the age of thirteen, September 7, 1963, in Pasadena, California, at the Rose Bowl. It was a big international assembly. We had 100,000 people. We drove all the way from Lubbock, Texas.

Eventually I started giving bigger talks - ten minutes in front of the congregation. And a circuit servant recommended me to give the hour lectures that are done on Sunday when they invite the general public. They usually reserved those [sermons] for the elders of the congregation.

[In an authoritarian voice:] "Sure he's young. But he can handle it. He's a good Christian boy. He has no vices, and he's obedient to his parents and seems to have pretty good Bible knowledge."

So at the age of sixteen I started giving hour lectures in front of whole congregations. I was assigned first to a group in Sweetwater, Texas, and then, eventually, in Brownfield, Texas, I got my first congregation. At age twenty, I had become what they call a pioneer minister.

Jehovah's Witnesses have a very sophisticated training program, and they also have kind of a quota system. You have to devote ten to twelve hours a month to door-to-door preaching. It's like sales management. IBM has nothing on these guys.

So when I became a pioneer minister, I devoted most of my full time to doing the door-to-door ministry. I had to do like 100 hours a month, and I had to have seven Bible studies. I started lecturing other congregations. I began to get a lot of responsibility, and I was accepted at a school in Brooklyn, New York, a very elite school that Jehovah's Witnesses have for the crème de la crème, the top one percent. But I didn't go.

A few things no longer made sense to me. For example, the quota system. It seemed like every time I wanted to turn a corner and get into another position of responsibility, I had to do these secular material things to prove my godliness. It's like if you meet your quotas this month, God loves you. If you don't meet your quotas next month, God doesn't love you. That didn't make very much sense. One month God loves me and one month He doesn't?

The other thing I started noticing is tunnel vision. Jehovah's Witnesses are the only ones who are going to be saved in God's new order, nobody else, because all of them are practicing false religions. Well, I thought, Mother Teresa's a Catholic. That's our dire enemy. So I said, Wait a minute, Mother

Teresa has spent her entire life doing things that Jesus said: take care of the poor, the sick, the orphans. But she's not going to have God's favor because she's a Catholic?

We criticized the Catholic Church because they had a man, a priest, to whom they had to confess. And we'd say, "You shouldn't have to go to a man to confess your sins! Your sin is against God!" And yet we went to a Body of Elders. You confessed your sins to them, and they put you on hold, and said [Elder as telephone operator:] "Hold on just a minute . . . What do you think, Lord? No? . . . Okay, I'm sorry, we tried our best but you're not repentant enough. Your sin is too big, so you either lose your fellowship in the church or you're going to be on probation."

If the sin is against God, shouldn't I directly go to God and beg for mercy?

Probably the nail that hit the coffin was that I noticed that they started reading their Bible less. Jehovah's Witnesses have books for everything that are put out by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. The only people on the entire planet who know how to interpret Bible Scripture correctly are that group of men, that committee in Brooklyn, who tell Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide how to dress, how to talk, what to say, what not to say, how to apply Scripture and what the future is going to be like. God told them, so they can tell us. I appreciated the books. But if the Bible is the book of knowledge and if it's God's instructions, well, shouldn't we get our answers out of the Bible? Paul himself said find out for yourself what is a true and acceptable word of God. Don't let men tickle your ears.

I started saying, "Don't worry so much about what the Watchtower says - read the Bible for yourself." Ears started to prick up.

[Old Southerner's drawl:] "I think we got us an apostate here, Judge. Yup. I think this old boy's one taco short of something."

Even my father said, "You better watch it, young man, that's the demons talking right there. That's the demons trying to get in and cause division."

I said, "Dad, it's not the demons. People don't need to read so much of these other publications. They can find their answers with prayer and in the Bible."

Spiritually I no longer felt at ease. So in 1979, knowing that I could not make headway, I left, disgruntled and with a bad taste in my mouth, because all my life I had put my soul, my heart, my mind into the church. That was the problem. I didn't put it in God. I put it in a man-made organization.

I can't go to other religions. As a Jehovah's Witness, I had been trained,

through the Scriptures, to show that they are all wrong. That idolatry is bad. Trinity doesn't exist.

I'm like a man without a religion. I was not a man without a God. But where could I go?

In 1985, I decided to come to Los Angeles and get on the Johnny Carson show and make my mark as a great comedian and actor. I have always felt like I was born for something. I didn't know whether it was going to be finding the cure to cancer or becoming an actor. I kept praying and it got frustrating after a while.

So I just went to the Catholic church close to my house, and I tried it. I remember on Ash Wednesday I had that ash cross on my forehead. I was trying anything I could. I went for about two or three months, and I just couldn't do it anymore, man. It was: Stand up. Sit down.

Okay, stick your tongue out.
You got a lot of exercise. I think I lost about five pounds. But that's about it. So now I'm more lost than ever.
But it never passed through my mind that there is not a Creator. I have His phone number, but the line's always busy. I'm doing my little movie shots. A film called Deadly Intent. A telephone commercial in Chicago. An Exxon commercial. A couple of bank commercials. In the meantime I'm doing construction work on the side.

We're working on this mall. It's the holiday season, and they put these extra booths in the hallways. There was a gal at one, and we had to pass right in front of her. I'd say, "Good morning, how are you?" If she said anything, it was "Hi." And that was it.

Finally, I said, "Miss, you never say anything. I just wanted to apologize if there was something I said wrong."

She said, "No, you see, I'm a Muslim." "You're what?"

"I'm a Muslim, and Muslim women, we don't talk to men unless we have something specific to talk about; otherwise we don't have anything to do with men." "Ohhhhh. Muslim."

She said, "Yes, we practice the religion of Islam."

"Islam - how do you spell that?"

"I-s-l-a-m."

At the time, I knew that Muslims were all terrorists. She doesn't even have a beard. How could she possibly be Muslim?

"How did this religion get started?"

"Well, there was a prophet."

"A prophet?" "Muhammad."

I started some research. But I just came from one religion. I had no intention of becoming Muslim.

The holidays are over. The booth moves. She's gone.

I continued to pray, and asked why my prayers weren't being answered. In November of 1991, I was going to bring my uncle Rockie home from the hospital. I started to empty his drawers to pack his stuff and there was a Gideon Bible. I said, God has answered my prayers. This Gideon Bible. (Of course, they put it in every hotel room.) This is a sign from God that He's ready to teach me. So I stole the Bible.

I went home and I started praying: O God, teach me to be a Christian. Don't teach me the Jehovah's Witness way. Don't teach me the Catholic way. Teach me Your way! You would not have made this Bible so hard that ordinary people sincere in prayer could not understand it.

I got all the way through the New Testament. I started the Old Testament. Well, eventually there's a part in the Bible about the prophets.

Bing!

I said, Wait a minute, that Muslim lady said they had a prophet. How come he's not in here?

I started thinking, Muslims - one billion in the world. Man, one out of every five people on the street theoretically could be a Muslim. And I thought: One billion people! C'mon now, Satan is good. But he's not that good.

So then I said, I'll read their book, the Qur'an, and I'll see what kind of pack of lies this thing is. It probably has an illustration on how to dissemble an AK-47. So I went to an Arabic bookstore.

They asked, "What can I help you with?"

"I'm looking for a Qur'an."

"Okay, we have some over here."

They had some very nice ones - thirty dollars, forty dollars."

"Look, I just want to read it, I don't want to become one, okay?"

"Okay, we have this little five-dollar paperback edition."

I went home, and started reading my Qur'an from the beginning, with Al-

Fatihah. And I could not get my eyes off of it.

Hey, look at this. It talks about a Noah in here. We have Noah in our Bible too. Hey, it talks about Lot and Abraham. I can't believe it. I never knew Satan's name was Iblis. Hey, how about that.

When you get that picture on your TV set and it's got a little bit of static and you push that button [klop] - fine tune. That's exactly what happened with the Qur'an.

I went through the whole thing. So I said, Okay, I've done this, now what's the next thing you got to do? Well, you gotta go to their meeting place. I looked in the yellow pages, and I finally found it: Islamic Center of Southern California, on Vermont. I called and they said, "Come on Friday."

Now I really start getting nervous, `cause now I know I'm going to have to confront Habib and his AK-47.

I want people to understand what it's like for an American Christian coming into Islam. I'm kidding about the AK-47, but I don't know if these guys have daggers under their coats, you know. So I come up to the front, and sure enough, there's this six-foot-three, 240-pound brother, beard and everything, and I'm just in awe.

I walked up and said, "Excuse me, sir."

[Arabic accent:] "Go to the back!"

He thought I was already a brother.

I said, "Yessir, yessir" [meekly].

I didn't know what I was going back for, but I went back anyway. They had the tent and the rugs were out. I'm standing there, kind of shy, and people are sitting down listening to the lecture. And people are saying, Go ahead, brother, sit down. And I'm going, No, thanks, no, thanks, I'm just visiting.

So finally the lecture's over. They're all lined up for prayer and they go into sajdah. I was really taken aback.

It started making sense intellectually, in my muscles, in my bones, in my heart and my soul.

So prayers are over. I say, hey, who's going to recognize me? So I start to mingle like I'm one of the brothers, and I'm walking into the mosque and a brother says, "Assalaamu alaikum." And I thought, Did he say "salt and bacon"?

"Assalaamu alaikum."

There's another guy who said "salt and bacon" to me.

I didn't know what in the world they were saying, but they all smiled.

Before one of these guys noticed that I was not supposed to be there and took me to the torture chamber, or beheaded me, I wanted to see as much as I could. So eventually I went to the library, and there was a young Egyptian brother; his name was Omar. God sent him to me.

Omar comes up to me, and he says, "Excuse me. This is your first time here?" He has a real strong accent.

And I said, Yeah, it is.

"Oh, very good. You are Muslim?"

"No, I'm just reading a little."

"Oh, you are studying? This is your first visit to a mosque?"

"Yes."

"Come, let me show you around." And he grabs me by the hand, and I'm walking with another man - holding hands. I said, These Muslims are friendly.

So he shows me around.

"First of all, this is our prayer hall, and you take your shoes off right here."

"What are these things?"

"These are little cubicles. That's where you put your shoes."

"Why?"

"Well, because you're approaching the prayer area, and it's very holy. You don't go in there with your shoes on; it's kept real clean."

So he takes me to the men's room.

"And right here, this is where we do wudu."

"Voodoo! I didn't read anything about voodoo!"

"No, not voodoo. Wudu!"

"Okay, because I saw that stuff with the dolls and the pins, and I'm just not ready for that kind of commitment yet."

He says, "No, wudu, that's when we clean ourselves."

"Why do you do that?"

"Well, when you pray to God, you have to be clean, so we wash our hands and feet."

So I learned all these things. He let me go, and said, Come back again.

I went back and asked the librarian for a booklet on prayer, and I went home and practiced. I felt that if I was trying to do it right, God would accept it. I just continued to read and read and visit the mosque.

I had a commitment to go on a tour of the Midwest on a comedy circuit. Well, I took a prayer rug with me. I knew that I was supposed to pray at certain times, but there are certain places where you are not supposed to pray, one of which is in the bathroom. I went into a men's room on a tourist stop and I laid out my carpet and I started doing my prayers.

I came back, and when Ramadan was over, I started getting calls from different parts of the country to go and lecture as a Jehovah's Witness minister who embraced Islam. People find me a novelty. [Two immigrants converse:]

"This guy like apple pie and he drives a Chevy truck. He is a red-blooded American boy. He was a Jehovah's Witness."

"Those people that come in the morning?"

"Yeah, those."

"That never let us sleep on Sundays?"

"Yeah, this guy was one of them. Now he's one of us."

Eventually somebody would come up to me and say [Pakistani accent], "Oh, brother, your talk was so good. But you know, in the Shafi'i school of thought.."

The only thing I could do was turn to them and say, "Gee, brother, I'm so sorry, I wish I knew about that, but I don't know anything about Islam except what's in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Some of them are taken aback and say, "Ha-ha! Poor brother. He doesn't know anything. He only knows the Qur'an."

Well, that's what I'm supposed to know. And it's been a very loving protection. I think it's all in Allah's hands."

http://www.newmuslims.tk

Source: The Islamic Bulletin, San Francisco, CA 94141-0186

8- George Anthony Former Catholic priest (Sri Lanka).

Fr. Antony was a Catholic priest in Sri Lanka. His tale of becoming a true believer and adopting a name Adulrahman for him is quite interesting. Being a Christian priest he was well versed with the teachings of the Bible. He quotes the Bible frequently as he sits to narrate his journey to Islam. While reading the Bible he found many contradictions in it. He goes on quoting verses from the Bible in Sinhalese language and points out the ambiguity.

"He quotes Esaiah 9:12 which reads like this." And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith; I am not learned." This verse is a prophecy towards prophet Mohammed (pbuh), because Mohammad (pubh) was an unlettered prophet and when he was an unlettered prophet and when he was asked by Angel Gabrielto read out the first divine revelation upon him he said, "I am not learned" Contrary to the Christian belief that Jesus is God, Acts 2:22 of the Holy Bible considers Jesus as a man. It says, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourself also know."

Christianity and the other religions, do not define the prophehood according to him. Nor does Bhudda and is silent about the other prophets. Contrary to this it is compulsory in Islam to believe in all the formaer Prophets and to revere them. According to Abdulrahman this belief is quite convincing and appealing to every body. Abdulrahman says that there is no reason for the restriction that a Roman Catholic priest cannot marry, when the priests of many other sects of Christianity can marry. Abdulrahman was pondering over the confusions of Christian belief. Meanwhile he got an Audio Cassette of a converted Christian priest Sri Lanka Shareef D Alwis. Cassettes of Ahmad Deedat also attracted him. His continuous efforts to find the truth finally resulted in reversion to Islam. Fr. George Antony

Abdulrahman, hails from the Rathnapura village of Sri Lanka. He was rendering his services as a priest in Katumayaka church. He has ten years of training of the priesthood to his credit. He wrote letters to his mother introducing Islam. After months of studies she followed the path of her son and embraced Islam. Abdurahman's only sister is working in Greece. His father and sister still remained Christians. Abdurahman gave up his highly respected career as a priest for the sake of truth. He happily sacrificed all material gains for the spiritual triumph. He is now working as a trainee in Islam Presentation Committee of Kuwait.

9- Dr. Gary Miller (Abdul-Ahad Omar) a mathematician and Christian missionary (Canada)



Gary Miller (Abdul-Ahad Omar) shows how we can establish true faith by setting standards of truth. He illustrates a simple but effective method of finding out the right direction in our search for truth.

G.R. Miller is a mathematician and a theologian. He was active in Christian missionary work at a particular point of his life but he soon began to discover many inconsistencies in the Bible. In 1978, he happened to read the Qur'an expecting that it, too, would contain a mixture of truth and falsehood.

He discovered to his amazement that the message of the Qur'an was precisely the same as the essence of truth that he had distilled from the Bible. He became a Muslim and since then has been active in giving public presentations on Islam including radio and television appearances. He is also the author of several articles and publications about Islam.

A very important Christian missionary converted to Islam and became a major herald for Islam, he was a very active missionary and was very knowledgeable about the Bible.

This man likes mathematics so much, that's why he likes logic. One day, he decided to read the Quran to try to find any mistakes that he might take advantage of while inviting Muslims to convert to Christianity.... He expected the Koran to be an old book written 14 centuries ago, a book that talks about the desert and so on...He was amazed from what he found. He discovered that this Book had what no other book in the world has.... He expected to find some stories about the hard time that the Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) had, like the death of his wife Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) or the death of his sons and daughters...however, he did not find anything like that... and what made him

even more confused is that he found a full "sura"(chapter) in the Koran named "Mary" that contains a lot of respect to Mary(peace be upon her) which is not the case even in the books written by Christians nor in their bibles. He did not find a Sura named after "Fatimah"(the prophet's daughter) nor "Aishah"(the Prophet's wife), may Allah(God) be pleased with both of them. He also found that the name of Jesus(Peace Be Upon Him) was mentioned in the Koran 25 times while the name of "Mohammed"(Peace Be Upon Him) was mentioned only 4 times, so he became more confused. He started reading the Koran more thoroughly hoping to find a mistake but he was shocked when he read a great verse which is verse number 82 in Surat Al-Nisa'a (Women) that says:

“Do they not consider the Koran (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy”.

Dr Miller says about this verse: “ One of the well known scientific principles is the principle of finding mistakes or looking for mistakes in a theory until it’s proved to be right (Falsification Test)…what’s amazing is that the Holy Quran asks Muslims and non-muslims to try to find mistakes in this book and it tells them that they will never find any”. He also says about this verse: no writer in the world has the courage to write a book and say that it’s empty of mistakes, but the Quran, on the contrary, tells you that it has no mistakes and asks you to try to find one and you won’t find any.

Another verse that Dr Miller reflected on for a long time is the verse number 30 in Surat “Al-Anbiya’a”(The Prophets): “ Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

He says: ”this verse is exactly the subject of the scientific research that won the Noble prize in 1973 and was about the theory of the “Great Explosion”. According to this theory, the universe was the result of a great explosion that lead to the formation of the universe with its skies and planets.

Dr Miller says: “now we come to what’s amazing about the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and what’s pretended about the devils helping him, God says: “No evil ones have brought down this (Revelation), it would neither suit them nor would they be able (to produce it). Indeed they have been removed far from even (a chance of) hearing it”(26:210-212). “When thou does read the Quran, seek Allah's protection from Satan the Rejected

One"(16:98).

You see? can this be the devil's way to write a book? how can he write a book then tells you to ask God for protection from this devil before reading that book? those are miraculous verses in this miraculous book! and has a logical answer to those who pretend that it's from the devil". And among the stories that amazed Dr Miller is the story of the Prophet(PBUH) with Abu-Lahab… Dr Miller says: "this man(Abu Lahab) used to hate Islam so much that he would go after the Prophet wherever he goes to humiliate him. If he saw the prophet talking to strangers, he used to wait till he finishes and then ask them: what did Mohammed tell you? If he said it's white then it's in reality black and if he said it's night then it's day. He meant to falsify all what the prophet says and to make people suspicious about it. And 10 years before the death of Abu Lahab, a sura was inspired to the prophet, named "Al-Masad". This sura tells that Abu Lahab will go to hell, in other words, it says that Abu Lahab will not convert to Islam. During 10 years, Abu Lahab could have said: "Mohammed is saying that I will not become a Muslim and that I will go to the hell fire, but I'm telling you now that I want to convert to Islam and become a Muslim. What do you think about Mohammed now? Is he saying the truth or no? Does his inspiration come from God?". But Abu Lahab did not do that at all although he was disobeying the prophet in all matters, but not in this one. In other words, it was as if the prophet(PBUH) was giving Abu Lahab a chance to prove him wrong! But he did not do that during 10 whole years! he did not convert to Islam and did not even pretend to be a Muslim!! Throughout 10 years, he had the chance to destroy Islam in 1 minute! But this did not happen because those are not the words of Mohammed (PBUH) but the words of God Who knows what's hidden and knows that Abu Lahab will not become a Muslim.

How can the prophet (PBUH) know that Abu Lahab will prove what is said in that Sura if this was not inspiration from Allah? How can he be sure throughout 10 whole years that what he has (the Quran) is true if he did not know that it's inspiration from Allah?? For a person to take such a risky challenge, this has only one meaning: that this is inspiration from God.

"Perish the hands of the Father of Flame (Abu Lahab)! perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of blazing Flame! His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood; As fuel! A twisted rope of palm-leaf fibre round her (own) neck!"(surat Al-Masad). Dr Miller says about a verse that amazed him: one of the miracles in the

Quran is challenging the future with things that humans cannot predict and to which the “Falsification Test” applies, this test consists of looking for mistakes until the thing that is being tested is proved to be right. For example, let’s see what the Quran said about the relation between Muslims and Jews. Quran says that Jews are the major enemies for Muslims and this is true until now as the main enemy for Muslims are the Jews.

Dr Miller continues: this is considered a great challenge since the Jews have the chance to ruin Islam simply by treating Muslims in a friendly way for few years and then say: here we are treating you as friends and the Quran says that we are your enemies, the Quran must be wrong then! But this did not happen during 1400 years!! and it will never happen because those are the words of The One who knows the unseen (God) and not the words of humans.

Dr Miller continues: can you see how the verse that talks about the enmity between Muslims and Jews constitutes a challenge to the human mind? “Strongest among men in enmity to the Believers wilt thou find the Jews and Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the Believers wilt thou find those who say, "We are Christians": because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: they pray: "Our Lord! We believe; write us down among the witnesses”(5: 82-84)

This verse applies to Dr Miller as he was a Christian but when he knew the truth, he believed and converted to Islam and became a herald. May Allah support him.

Dr Miller says about the unique style of the Quran that he finds wonderful: no doubt there is something unique and amazing in Quran that is not present anywhere else, as the Quran gives you a specific information and tells you that you did not know this before. For example: "This is part of the tidings of the things unseen, which We reveal unto thee (O Prophet!) by inspiration: thou was not with them when they cast lots with arrows, as to which of them should be charged with the care of Maryam: nor was thou with them when they disputed (the point)”(3: 44).

"Such are some of the stories of the Unseen, which We have revealed unto thee: before this, neither thou nor thy People knew them. So persevere patiently: for the End is for those who are righteous"(11: 49). "Such is one of the stories of what happened unseen, which We reveal by inspiration unto thee: nor was thou (present) with them when they concerted their plans together in the process of weaving their plots"(12: 102) Dr Miller continues: "no other holy book uses this style, all the other books consist of information that tells you where this information came from. For example, when the (distorted) holy bible talks about the stories of the ancient nations, it tells you that a this king lived in a this place and a that leader fought in that battle, and that a certain person had a number of kids and their names are…. But this book (distorted Bible) always tells you that if you want to know more, you can read a certain book since that information came from that book".

Dr Garry Miller continues: "this is in contrary to the Quran which gives you the information and tells you that it's new!! And what's amazing is that the people of Mecca at that time -time of inspiration of those verses- used to hear those verses and the challenge that the information in those verses was new and was not known by Mohammed (PBUH) nor by his people at that time, and despite that, they never said: we know this and it is not new, and they did not say: we know where Mohammed came from with those verses. This never happened, but what happened is that nobody dared to say that he was lying to them because those was really new information, not coming from the human mind but from Allah who knows the unseen in the past, the present and the future".

10- Rev. David Benjamin Keldani (Abdu 'l-Ahad Dáwúd)(Iran).



Professor 'Abdu 'l-Ahad Dawud, B.d., the writer of the present series of articles is the former Reverend David Benjamin Keldani, B.D., a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Caldean sect. When asked how he came to Islam he wrote:

"My conversion to Islam cannot be attributed to any cause other than the gracious direction of the Almighty Allah. Without this Divine guidance all learning, search and other efforts to find the Truth may even lead one astray. The moment I belived in the Absolute Unity of God His Holy Apostle Muhummed became the pattern of my conduct and behvior."

'Abdu 'l-Ahad Dáwúd is the former Rev. David Benjamin Keldani, B.D., a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Chaldean sect. He was born in 1867 at Urmia in Persia; educated from his early infancy in that town. From 1886-89 (three years) he was on the teaching staff of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian (Nestorian) Christians at Urmia. In 1892 he was sent by Cardinal Vaughan to Rome, where he underwent a course of philosophical and theological studies at the Propaganda Fide College, and in 1895 was ordained Priest. During that time he contributed a series of articels to The Tablet on "Assyria, Rome and Canterbury"; and also to the Irish Record on the "Authenticity of the Pentateuch." He had several translations of the Ave Maria in different languages, published in the Illustrated Chatholic Missions. While in Constantinople on his way to Persia in 1895, he contributed a long series of articels in English and French to the daily paper, published there under the name of The Levant Herald, on "Eastern Churches." In 1895 he joined the French Lazarist Mission at Urmia, and published for the first time in the history of that Misssion a periodical in the

vernacular Syriac called Qala-La Shárá, i.e. "The Voice of Truth." In 1897 he was delegated by two Uniate-Chaldean Archbishops of Urmia and of Salmas to erpresent the Eastern Catholics at the Eucharistic Congress held at Paray-le-Monial in France under the presidency of Cardinal Perraud. This was, of course, on official invitation. The paper read at the Congress by "Father Benjamin" was published in the Annals of the Eucharistic Congress, called "Le Pelirin" of that year. In this paper, the Chaldean Arch-Priest (that being his official title) deplored the Catholic system of education among the Nestorians, and fortold the imminent appearance of the Russian priests in Urmia.

In 1898 Father Benjamin was back again in Persia. In his native village, Digala, about a mile from the town, he opened a school gratis. The next year he was sent by the Ecclesiastical authorities to take charge of the diocese of Salmas, where a sharp and scandalous conflict between the Uniate Archbishop, Khudabásh, and the Lazarist Fathers for a long time had been menacing a schism. On the day of New Year 1900, Father Benjamin preached his last and memorable sermon to a large congregation, including many non-Catholic Armenians and others in the Cathedral of St. George´s Khorovábád, Salmas. The preacher´s subject was "New Century and New Men." He recalled the fact that the Nestorian Missionaries, before the apperance of Islam, had preached the Gospel in all Asia; that they had numerous establishments in India (especially at the Malbar Coast), in Tartary, China and Mongolia; and that they translated the Gospel to the Turkish Uighurs and into other languages; that the Catholic, American and Anglican Missions, in spite of the little good they had done to the Assyro-Chaldean nation in the way of preliminary education, had split the nation - already a handful - in Persia, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia into numerous hostile sects; and that their efforts were destined to bring about the final collapse. Consequently he advised the natives to make some sacrifices in order to stand upon their own legs like men, and not to depend upon the foreign missions, etc.

Five big and ostentatious missions - Americans, Anglicans, French, Germans and Russians - with their colleges, Press backed up by rich religious societies, Consuls and Ambassadors, were endeavouring to convert about one hundred thousand Assyro-Chaldeans from nestorian heresy unto one or another of the five heresies. But the Russian Mission soon outstripped the others, and it was this mission which in 1915 pushed or forced the Assyrians of Persia, as well as the mountaineer tribes of Kurdistan, who had then immigrated into the plains of Salmas and Urmia, to take up arms

against their respective Governments. The result was that half of his people perished in the war and the rest expelled from their native lands.

The great question: Was Christianity, with all its multitudinous shapes and colours, and with its unauthentic, spurious and corrupted Scriptures, the true Religion of God? In the summer of 1900 he retired to his small villa in the middle of vineyards near the celebrated fountain of Cháli-Boulaghi in Digala, and there for a month spent his time in prayer and meditation, reading over and over the Scriptures in their original texts. The crisis ended in a formal resignation sent in to the Uniate Archbishop of Urmia, in which he frankly explained to Mar (Mgr.) Touma Audu the reasons for abandoning his sacerdotal functions. All attempts made by the ecclesiastical authorities to withdraw his decision were of no avail. There was no personal quarrel or dispute between Father Benjamin and his superiors; it was all question of conscience.

He was employed in Tabriz as Inspector in the Persian Service of Posts and Customs under the Belgian experts. Then he was taken into the service of the Crown Prince Muhummed 'Alí Mirsá as teacher and translator. It was in 1903 that he again visited England and there joined the Unitarian Community. And in 1904 he was sent by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to carry on an educational and enlightening work among his country people. On his way to Persia he visited Constantinople; and after several interviews with Sheikhu 'l-Islám Jemálu 'd-Dín Effendi and other Ulémas (Muslim scholars), he embraced Islam.

11-Muhammad Aman Hobohm Diplomat, Missionary and Social Worker (Germany).

Why Do Westerners Embrace Islam?

There are various reasons for it. In the first place, truth always has its force. The basic tenets of Islam are so rational, so natural and so appealing that an honest truth-seeker cannot help being impressed by them. To take, for example, the belief in monotheism. How it raises the dignity of man and how it frees us from the grip of superstition! How naturally it leads to the equality of men, for all have been created by the same God and all are the servants of the same Lord. For the Germans, in particular, the belief in God is a source of inspiration, a source of fearless courage and a source of the feeling of security. Then the idea of life after death turns the tables. Life in this world remains no more the main objective, and [a] great part of human energy is devoted to the betterment of the Hereafter. The faith in the Day of Judgement automatically spurs a man to give up misdeeds, for good deeds alone can ensure eternal salvation, although the wrong deeds may prosper here for a limited period. The belief that none can escape the consequences of the judgement of a Just, Impartial and Omniscient Lord makes one think twice before one does anything wrong and surely this internal check is more effective than the most efficient police in the world.

Another thing that attracts foreigners to Islam is its emphasis on tolerance. Then the daily prayers teach one punctuality and the one month of fasting enables one to exercise self-control over oneself and without doubt punctuality and self-discipline are two of the most important attributes of a good man and a great man.

Now comes the real achievement of Islam. It is the only ideology which has succeeded in instilling in its followers the spirit of observing the ethical and moral limitations without external compulsion. For a Muslim knows that, wherever he is, he is being observed by God. This belief keeps him away from sin. As man is naturally inclined towards goodness, Islam also offers peace of mind and heart --- and this is what is totally absent from the Western society of today.

I have lived under different systems of life and have had the opportunity of studying various ideologies, but have come to the conclusion that none is as perfect as Islam.

Communism has its attractions, so have secular democracy and Nazism. **But none has got a complete code of a noble life. Only Islam has it, and that is why good men embrace it.**

Islam is not theoretical; it is practical. Islam is not a departmental affair; it means complete submission to the will of God.

From "Islam, Our Choice"

12-Archpriest Viacheslav Polosin (Russia).

Viacheslav Sergeevich Polosin was born in 1956. In 1979 he graduated from the Philosophy Faculty of MGU and in 1984 from the Moscow Ecclesiastical Seminary. He was ordained a priest and served in parishes in the dioceses of Central Asia and Kaluga of RPTs. In 1990 he was elevated to the rank of archpriest. In the same year he was elected a people's deputy of RSFSR from Kaluga region and headed the committee of the Supreme Soviet on freedom of conscience. While working in the Supreme Soviet, he graduated from the diplomatic academy of the ministry of foreign affairs and defended his dissertation on the subject: "The Russian Orthodox church and the state in USSR, 1971-1991." From 1993 he has been an employee of the staff of the State Duma on relations with public associations and religious organizations. He was a member of the Russian Christian Democratic Movement and a member of the Council of Christian Organizations. In 1991 he went on leave from the Kaluga diocese and since 1995 he has not officiated in liturgies. In his interview with the Musulmane journal, he officially called himself a Muslim: "I consider that the Koran is the final Revelation on earth, sent down to the Prophet Muhammed. There is no God but the One God, Allah, and Muhammed is his Messenger." Viacheslav Polosin is the author of many scholarly works on historical,political, religious, and philosophical subjects. In February of this year he defended another dissertation on the subject: "The dialectics of myth and political myth-making." His basic philosophical ideas are presented in his book "Myth, Religion, and the State" (Moscow, 1999).

In an interview with the journal "Musulmane;" **VIACHESLAV POLOSIN** said that Islam is not an offshoot from Christianity but a second and great reform of Abrahamic monotheism. Abraham believed in the one God and was the first to express this publicly. He announced it and confirmed it for his successors, becoming the "father" of all believers. Subsequently this tradition suffered deviations. It is known that all of the prophets--incidentally many of them also are called "saviors"--criticized the people for their deviation into heathenism. And the greatest prophet, Jesus, also criticized people for heathenism. More than that, he himself spoke of himself in parables as sent by God with a special mission. Before this people said: "Prophets are sinners like us." But God sent a sinless Angel of God--in the bible angels are called "sons of God" (Job 38.7)--who really was a pure prophet but he was not obeyed. They conceived the desire to destroy him. He criticized the dominating shortcomings of the time and spread the Good

News of the one God beyond the boundaries of a single people, for all people; this was a great reform of Judaism. Islam is the second reform, cleansing the Christianity of the sixth and seventh centuries from the pagan accretions which has been formed in the period of its acquiring official status and compulsory mass acceptance

What is attractive in Islam is simply **Monotheism** in its pure form in order not to think of God in an unworthy manner. I like it when there are no contradictions and there is logical consistency. The Glorious Koran says outright that the truth is not contradictory. There is the doctrine of the transcendental God, the Creator, the Almighty, the Merciful and all the rest should be in agreement with this. If something contradicts this, that means it must be eliminated.

Nezavisimaia gazeta--religii, 2 June 1999

Source: http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/9906a.html#03

Priests Embracing Islam

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

".. *And you will find the nearest in love to the believers (Muslims) those who say: We are Christians. That is because amongst them are priests and monks, and they are not proud. And when they (who call themselves Christians) listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger (Muhammad PBUH), you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of the truth they have recognised. They say: Our Lord!, We believe; so write us down among the witnesses. And why should we not believe in Allâh and in that which has come to us of the truth (Islâmic Monotheism)? And we wish that our Lord will admit us (in Paradise on the Day of Resurrection) along with the righteous people (Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his companions may Allâh be pleased with them*) ".

[The Noble Qur'an , Sûrah Al-Mâ'idah 5:82-84]

For more stories of Priests, Vicars and Preachers embracing Islam, please visit these sites

http://www.islamtomorrow.com

http://www.newmuslims.tk

http://thetruereligion.org

http://wadee3.5u.com

http://islamway.com

PBUH: Peace and Blessings of Allâh be Upon Him